

# LIVING EDUCATION

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# LIVING EDUCATION

Some views on the purpose of Education  
today and its future prospects

by

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*Living Education*



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE: Dr Shepherd completed his proof reading before his untimely passing; we offer this word of tribute to a great teacher of teachers, who by his service to Westminster Training College has influenced the course of education for many years to come.

Mr D. A. Rigg, M.A., L.R.A.M., A.R.C.M., kindly undertook the compilation of the Index, and to him our thanks are due.

## CHAPTER ONE

### *Education in a Changing World*

THE FIRST edition of this book appeared in 1944 and represented my views and a summary of those of many young men and women in the Royal Air Force. After ten years of teaching in North London, I was faced with hundreds of airmen wishing to become aircrew or to remuster to various trades, all of whom were needing some help with English, mathematics, or various other things. From the discussions and written work of these young men could be drawn a representative view of the end product of our recent educational system. From informal discussion with these and in the many regular Discussion Groups it became suddenly possible to gather the opinions and criticisms of our schools and teaching of the previous fifteen years.

It had to be remembered that my informants had grown up in the period overshadowed by the coming war, with the world darkening with the rise of Hitler and Mussolini, with the slow failure of the League of Nations, and with a great deal of disillusion and unemployment at home. In some ways it was the end of an age educationally, the age in which elementary education was quite distinct from Grammar School education. The social distinction was great for both pupils and teachers. Those who gave me replies about what they considered to be lacking in elementary education and their own discovered needs when they left were constantly aware of their own struggles to get suitable employment and their own ignorance of the disaster of the war which had come upon them. Surely, they argued, the schools should prepare us for jobs, show us how we are governed and what is happening in the world. Some of those criticisms were directly due to the conditions of life in which they found themselves in the Forces, and I myself was probably over-impressed with those arguments at that time.

Thus *Living Education*, which I felt to be my own statement



of aims and ideals, was in many ways an interim report of my own development and very much influenced by my own environment. Re-reading it recently, I was quite shocked to find how much I now disagreed with, how often I seemed to be stressing the wrong matters, how many of the problems of 1944 had disappeared entirely, only to leave others never foreseen at that time. The book had been written for a different world.

On the other hand, it would be stupid to assert that all the aims of education had now changed and that we try to do entirely a different job in 1961. Men have not changed basically and the original chosen 'text' as the aim of education—'I come that they may have life and have it more abundantly'—attracts as much today as ever it did.

It is an over-repeated platitude that we live in days of rapid change and transition, but it is none the less true. Perhaps we need to define the details of our aims in education, religion, and politics every decade. Whereas statements in 1800 and 1850 might show little variety, there perhaps are much greater changes every decade in the mid-twentieth century. Are we—teachers, educational authorities and planners—sufficiently aware of contemporary needs and present conditions? We want to produce a society in which live intelligent and free men and women each expressing his own personality. But while that may be a true general aim, do not the methods vary very greatly for an Eskimo, a Pygmy, a Chinese, a boy at Harrow or in Hoxton? Education in a slum school with children inadequately fed and housed and whose lives are overshadowed by poverty and unemployment was surely something quite different from present conditions, when many schools are light modern places and children are well fed and dressed, with probably far too much money to spend. The problem of teaching has become entirely different.

✓ The new and more prosperous social conditions have undoubtedly produced a healthier race of children. Any constant visitor to schools must now be struck with the healthy and smart children he sees all around. Yet many new problems have appeared in society and in schools. In society there is probably a slackening in standards of honest work and possibly in morality. The opportunities for increased leisure seem all too frequently wasted. Far too many people are bored to death with



the ease of life around them. Mental breakdowns are more common than ever before, juvenile delinquency is rife, and crimes of violence all too common. All the new mechanical improvements in schools do not appear to raise any standards appreciably. What is wrong? How can we produce what we desire? Do we know what we want in 1961?

In the educational world the changes in emphasis and general discussion of ideas has been equally great. The end of the war and the passing of the Education Act saw most of us believing in a future with three types of schools: the Grammar School for those children of academic bent, the Technical Schools for those with special technical ability, and the Modern Schools for those needing general education.] It sounded as if developments would be expensive, but easy. The tests given to children between the ages of ten and eleven would find out those suitable for the Grammar Schools, and by some lucky chance of nature the second group of ability would probably show the technical aspirants. The Technical Schools were not available but could eventually be built. The large mass of children remaining would go to the Modern Schools where freed from all shadows of examinations or tests they would acquire a general education and work along the different lines which would be discovered by experiment. The Modern Schools would acquire status when all the new fine buildings were finished. )

3 In practice, some of these plans have worked out, but largely there has been astonishing variety of differences. Technical Schools have been confused with Grammar or Modern Schools. The new glass palaces built for Modern Schools often allowed the general public to watch every movement from the streets, but still irritatingly enough they failed to be considered as equal in status with the older Grammar Schools.

Next came the criticisms of the 'eleven plus' examinations and increased doubts about our ability to use intelligence tests to diagnose a child's whole future. In privately-run schools and some Modern Schools where the experiment was tried, children with lower intelligence quotients than would allow entry to Grammar Schools worked hard and gained useful School Certificates. In the earlier pure theory this could not happen.



Then there had been a number of theorists who favoured one large Secondary School in each area and wished all children of all classes and abilities to attend. The idea suddenly gained great favour, partly for social and political reasons, and considerable numbers of large Comprehensive Schools have been, and are being built. In other areas the Modern Schools have been grouped together to give wider choices of training, and all kinds of arrangements have been made to enable brighter children, 'late developers', to transfer to Grammar Schools at the age of thirteen or even later.

Thus, the earlier idea of tripartite secondary education and the planned extension of Technical and Modern Schools has largely disappeared and it would take a book to describe the varieties of Secondary Schools that are taking its place. Every Comprehensive School seems also to differ greatly from its neighbours both in courses taught, house-systems, and gradings of ability or interests within the school.

A further major change must be noted. The earlier Secondary Modern Schools prided themselves on their freedom from examinations and from outside syllabuses. They existed to educate each child. Perhaps it is unfortunate that this idea could not have continued longer; for many most interesting and stimulating schools developed. But the weaker schools lacked objective, and the older pupils had few incentives to work hard at anything. The idea of learning to be a complete person or of acquiring intelligent interests had few attractions for the B and C classes in most schools. It was a game of football without goal-posts, the acquiring of interests and techniques of the game without the incentive of match play. In many schools nearly all boys and girls over thirteen were waiting—often patiently—to leave. Outside was real life with practical rewards and exciting possibilities.

To meet this some Headmasters began to allow the abler boys and girls to sit for examinations. Where the local authorities were hostile to the idea various subterfuges had to be adopted and pupils entered privately or attended evening classes to qualify.

But numbers of pupils who had been refused entry to Grammar Schools because of supposed lack of ability entered



and passed numbers of subjects at ordinary level and occasionally at advanced level in the School Certificate. Other examinations were taken in other schools. All over the country the last few years have seen thousands of children in Modern Schools taking examinations once considered sacred to Grammar Schools. The top classes of Modern Schools are rapidly becoming Grammar School streams, while below them are groups of children sitting examinations such as those of the Royal Society of Arts or College of Preceptors. Modern Schools are suddenly being harassed by examinations, but incentives to learning have reappeared and much sound work is being done. The problem now is whether it is always desirable to coach and perhaps force children into the channels suitable for the better grammar school classes. Are we paying a great price in abandoning the earlier idea of a general education to suit each child's interests and abilities? And what is happening to the unfortunate 'C streams' in the schools where passing examinations is having so much stress?

Opinion on the meaning of discipline seems also to be being modified, though generalization in this field is most difficult. The first half of this century saw the change-over from the traditional quiet and order in schools which was maintained by systems of rewards and punishments. Some corporal punishment was considered essential. In varying degrees in different schools this system of order disappeared and every child enjoyed greater freedom. School journeys, visits, sports, and social life broke down the barriers between teachers and pupils. The best schools became like friendly homes.

But the breaking down of barriers between classes, the dislike of people giving orders in adult life, and sometimes the fear of making decisions and accepting responsibility did not always have a good effect in schools. The lunatic fringe of the profession claimed to work on 'free discipline' but sometimes seemed to encourage disorder, lack of respect, and insolent disobedience. Some schools became most difficult for an ordinary teacher to work in, and not a few broke down under the strain. In schools where there were no practical objectives for the children and no planned directions, it did not seem to matter where one drifted. Many small children were bewildered and unhappy in this world where so many personal choices had to be made and where there were few ~~easy~~ standards of right and wrong.



Older boys and girls lost their respect for teachers and schools and merely wasted their time till they could leave.

Today there again seems to be a reaction. The return of examinations means that some solid work has to be done in an orderly fashion, and good order is essential for success. It is in schools where there are clear objectives and consistent work done in a regulated and orderly society that more and more pupils are wanting to stay on extra years rather than to escape early. Our thinking about school discipline needs to be re-examined in the light of experience. We need to ascertain what conditions are good for the pupils at each age and, what has been so often forgotten, what conditions will enable each teacher to give of his best without constant strain and irritation.

Enough has probably been said to suggest reasons why the *Living Education* of 1944 is now out of date and out of touch with contemporary problems. (Social life has changed, the organization of schools has changed, the nature of educational problems for the ordinary child has changed. Yet many of the original claims for using as a definition of education, 'I come that they may have life and have it more abundantly', seem even more true than when they were first elaborated.) Better conditions and better schools give far more opportunities for good living than have ever previously been possible. Young people have more leisure than ever before, and more money to make sports, travel, hobbies and interesting experiments possible. The 'abundant life' would seem apparently to be within reach, if the individuals had a taste for it or sufficient energy and force of character to claim it. We have to ask if it is to be found in physical activity and healthy bodies merely. Is it discoverable in something deeper rooted in behaviour, in passion for goodness, in a search for perfection in every line? If so a school's chief value will not be in what it has taught or even in inspired interests, but in awakening what is really a religious attitude to life, a sense of wonder, reverence and a deep longing for truth.

But words like 'passion', 'quest', 'sense of wonder' are all too easily used by educational writers. What can they mean to the young teacher who walks into his class of thirty-five children on a Monday morning? 'A passion for goodness' will have to begin by marking a register and efficiently distributing arithmetic books. Again our definition may be of value, for



life is largely made up of common daily duties, and our ability at living proved by the enjoyment and efficiency we bring to humdrum tasks.

Once again, let us examine what in education we mean by 'life'.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *What does Education mean today?*

**A**DAM AND EVE were presumably the first educationalists, and with the arrival of two sons must have begun to plan their training. They gave them all the requisites of health: food, fresh air, sunlight, rest, exercise, clothing when needed, and the security of an undivided home. They brought them up in 'the fear of the Lord'; they gave them vocational training, letting one have the animal and the other the vegetable kingdom of the world. Their system apparently looked perfect. Alas, the discipline of living together had been lacking, and the boys failed in their responsibility to each other. The first educational system led to murder.

Since then all civilizations and societies have had some system of educating their young, varying the methods in different estimates and being dependent on the size of the tribe and the community life desired. There must always be training in the simple tasks of life, what food can be safely eaten, where to sleep so that lions do not eat you, the advice not to venture out of the igloo into the storm or attempt to dive under icebergs. The customs of the society regarding property, marriage, travel, birth, and death must be mastered. But very soon the parting of the ways appears. Shall the boy or girl then be trained as an individualist, or as an active but subservient member of his tribe? The clear alternative may not always be there, but it is usually possible to decide where the stress lies.

Bees and ants, we gather, live for the hive or the ant-hill, and we know nothing of their highly developed personal graces or idiosyncrasies. Countries like Sparta or Nazi Germany trained their citizens to be obedient servants of the State and to enjoy life in so far as they belonged to a common culture and had a common end. On the other hand there have always been individualists, believing in giving each individual the opportunity to develop his own natural bent and abilities. The job of the State was considered to be to arrange conditions for



this to happen. In a sense Mozart and Shakespeare appear because their society makes it possible. Music and literature would be much poorer if they had been permanently conscripted into the Elizabethan wars against Spain, or those of the eighteenth-century European rivalries. But if Mozart and Shakespeare are the results of the individualist stress in education, so too are Cain and Bill Sykes. As Sir John Adams has pointed out, Fagin's academy is the perfect example of individual treatment and the training and encouragement of natural bents. The good of society must be considered.

In modern times the *Handbook of Suggestions* for teachers defined the British aim as 'to develop to the full the potentialities of every child at school in accord always with the general good of the community of which he is a member'. It appears that the two aspects have been combined happily, but if we wish to cavil we may ask who decides what is to be 'the general good of the community' and ask if we train for the standards and accepted customs of the present or for the society we envisage in the future. Can we complacently ignore the astonishingly rapid changes around us?

Many of the best minds of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have attempted definitions and descriptions for contemporary education, but it is not intended to discuss these in any detail here. Spenser's claim that it is 'preparation for complete living' has much to commend it, but has been criticized on its stress of the importance of the future. At the worst the child with his childish habits and interests is repressed and his attention driven to prepare for adult life. The children in the Dickens novels seem to us to be smaller adults with the mere disadvantages of immaturity and lack of strength. Childhood seemed an awkward stage of life whose sufferings had to be endured in order that the adult could appear as soon as possible. It was almost fortunate that for many there were simple tasks to be undertaken in mines, factories, and chimneys.

Obviously then any theory of modern education cannot be satisfied by considering our task one of preparation only. Each stage of life is of value in itself and our task is to live in the present as well as prepare for the future, otherwise the life in our maturity is a mere preparation for the ripeness of old age. A child is surely entitled to the interests and enjoyments of his own stage, and schools must be suitable places where



children can live fully in the present. On the other hand the wise educator knows also that all children are keenly interested in the future and are looking forward to growing up. Any small child is insulted if you underestimate his age and when asked tends to state the age he will be at the next birthday. The teacher must recognize this and so plan the present that a good future is possible and available. ✓

¶ If this is true, a present-day definition must not merely suggest planning activities which children enjoy without any regard of the future. It is the sentimental nonsense of poor homes to say (as I have been told by mothers), 'Let them enjoy themselves now. They'll have enough trouble later on'. It is surely equally false educational theory to fill the child's life with activities enjoyable enough for the moment but quite useless as a preparation for anything or for the acquiring of any good techniques. Some nonsense has been particularly encouraged by Christian teachers who have often quoted that Christ placed a child in the midst of His followers and bade them to become as little children. This would appear to have been on one occasion only, and for the particular reason of encouraging certain behaviour and attitudes. Christ also uses the fractious behaviour of children as an awful warning to His followers. We are to be childlike in interest and humility but striving to grow up in faith. We set a child in the midst to recognize his childishness, not to fall down and worship, and we are to consider our deep responsibility about the training we give him lest he stumble under our guidance.

((The definition of education chosen in this book is the adoption of the sentence used by Christ to define His much wider work: 'I come that they may have life and have it more abundantly.' Already it has been claimed that the word 'life' must mean not only a preparation for the future but also a fulfilling of our abilities and interests in the present. We have further shown that our living must be in a rapidly changing world and part of our training nowadays is adaptation to ever-altering conditions and environment. \

It is useful to consider for a moment the weakness of the phrase as a definition. What is meant by the word 'life'? It is used in so many interests and by so many quite different people that it can be almost meaningless. The student says he hopes to see some life in his holidays; the young Serviceman welcomes



the opportunity of seeing life abroad; the girl in a factory expects some life in the evenings. These phrases may be on the fringes of the basic meaning of the word, but they do emphasize a facet of its meaning. 'Life' to very many people has something to do with liveliness, interest, excitement, adventure. It is a contrast to the dull routine and boredom of much modern existence. It is what the young yearn for, in contrast to what they feel the elderly and pedantic are always advising and accepting. In our thinking about education and our plans for instruction we do well to keep before us the liveliness and dynamic force of the word 'life'.

It is proposed here to take a number of different interpretations of our definition and to show that each is essential to any full meaning of the word 'Education'. Yet before starting we should acknowledge that the method has its dangers. Education does not consist of a dozen separate entities which can be examined apart like germs under a microscope. We are thinking of one process and merely taking a number of headings for convenience. We do not teach a child to read, teach it an occupation for leisure time, teach it citizenship, all as separate things. The three things may well be one in practice. Having recognized the danger, it is still convenient to consider some of the meanings of the word 'life' and to apply them to our work in and out of schools today. Some of these will be noted here before examining them in more detail in succeeding chapters.

A first obvious meaning of the word is that it is the opposite of 'death'; an object is either alive or dead. Education is concerned with our physical well-being, our bodily health and welfare. This view would have seemed strange to many people in previous centuries, but has become an increasingly dominant theme since the Boer War showed the appalling physical state of so many young men in Britain. We have seen the introduction of physical training and games in every curriculum, medical and dental examinations for all children, special care for the handicapped, remedial treatment for possible deformities, the introduction of school meals, free milk, playing-fields, swimming-baths, and airy, light buildings. So much has been done (in most areas) that the teacher may complain today that he never has time to teach but is merely part of the Welfare Service for the physical and nutritional care of children while their parents are out at work. Magnificent school halls needed



for assemblies, drama, music, are frequently out of use, for half the day because of the priority of school dinners, and it is perhaps characteristic of our age that the division into sections of some large Comprehensive Schools is made by the Houses where the children drink milk and eat dinners.

✓ If, however, education is concerned with the whole of life, then it must begin by a proper appreciation of physical well-being. Irritating as it may be to the teacher to be asked to superintend school dinners, it is a much better state of affairs than existed before the last war when numbers of children who were expected to try to learn about vulgar fractions or percentages were hungry and half-clad. I personally taught under these conditions in North London and shall never forget attempting to teach while the physical condition of the boys called for so much help. We should begin any study of education by firmly stating that the health of body and mind should be inseparable, and our teaching fails when we forget that we are dealing with living minds and living bodies.

The basis of education in this country has always been Christian, though the interpretation of that sentence has varied greatly in different ages and different types of school. Christ certainly taught that we do not live by bread alone but by every word from God. This would imply that mere physical health is insufficient and we have to discover what we mean by the words of God. Curiously enough the Church, which for centuries provided the schools of the country, became the source of controversy in the nineteenth century, and elementary education was divided between schools belonging either to the Churches or the State. Nevertheless religious teaching was given in the State schools.

*reaching the  
the Christian world  
or church*  
This century has seen the bitterness of the controversy gradually evaporating, partly because of indifference, as well as of a growth of toleration in all spheres of national life. The 1944 Education Act laid down that all schools should have a daily act of worship and religious instruction should be available for all children. Since then the ecumenical movement has grown and religious talk centres largely on methods of reunion and co-operation. The need of schools—like that on the Mission field—forms one of the strongest arguments for a reunion of various Churches. It seems foolish that boys and girls and their teachers can worship daily together in schools, and yet on



leaving find religious difficulties insuperable for combined worship. There is much loose and foolish talk of 'our unhappy divisions' as if the Kingdom of God would suddenly appear if the Baptist, the Methodist, and the Anglican always walked through one door to a service. Yet no critic would be so blind as not to see many advantages in a closer co-operation between schools and Churches without the clash of sectarian differences.

✓ Religious education, however, must be viewed as something much wider than attendance at assemblies or services. It is the opening of the eyes to the interests and glories of life, the learning to appreciate music, art, literature, the admiration of all that is heroic and unselfish, the growth in mutual service and consideration for others. It is the discovery of reverence for all that is truly good, and the quest for perfection in all branches of living. That being so, despite wide differences of creed or of unbelief, all education worthy of the name must be religious. What can be done in schools? What wide differences must we expect and even encourage? Adam presumably had health of body and a sound religion but it was not good for him to live alone, so Eve was provided. Thus the problems of our living together soon appeared and the need for communication arose. ✓ Education at all times must be concerned with the various means of communication between individuals, between groups, and between nations. The subject is so vast that it can be merely touched upon here.

Communication in elementary schools in the past meant reading and writing. Possibly we also communicate by means of arithmetic and so that was added. In some places reading only was counted sufficient for the labouring classes, and it was feared that the art of writing was a luxury which might make them wish to rise out of their appointed state. These three subjects were the mainstay of all schools and are obviously vital to any sensible education today. Just after the last war there seemed to be a widespread problem of many 'non-readers' in schools, but it seems to have been tackled with energy and so today we hear much less about it. Obviously in a civilized society every child should learn to read and write, and any school which forgets that this is a priority is failing in its purpose. The real problem in even good schools is not in teaching the technique of finding the simple meaning of words, but of



learning to use books as tools for one's jobs and interest in life, and in acquiring a love of literature as a life-long possession. The great mass of the world's culture is available to us through books.

The usual means of communication between people is not writing, but speech, and strangely enough it is this which causes many barriers and irritations in social life. Many middle-class parents send their children to Private Schools in order that they can acquire the speech of the Public Schools. This will enable the children later to mix socially in any class of society, or so it is commonly found. The quaint dialects of the rural areas and the pert chatter of Cockneys and members of large cities may be enjoyed on holidays or in the theatre, but we have no intention of letting our own children speak in that manner. Public and Private Schools will certainly exist till all State schools can produce children speaking an acceptable Standard English, or such a variety of it which will enable them to follow any occupation for which they are fitted. There is still an urgent need in some areas for schools to regard good speech as of the highest importance.

✓ We communicate our ideas and express our feelings not only by words and writing, but in music and art and movement. All these must form part of an educated person's background and all are happily being increasingly enjoyed in schools.

Communication is as much a matter of receiving as of sending out ideas, and we are almost suddenly confronted with the new situation that the vast majority of children are looking at television and a few listening to the radio every evening. The full implication of this has yet to be realized, and we are still largely ignorant of the long-time results. Bright children are certainly acquiring all kinds of knowledge that they would not otherwise have. But will the love of seeing everything in pictures before the eyes slowly destroy imaginative powers? My own ideas of my imaginative pictures of Robin Hood and Pirates seem to me far more exciting than the somewhat crude stagy pictures I see on TV. This, however, may be a mere adult view. The increase of all kinds of visual aids in education is welcomed on all sides, but a personal view is that they also hold very considerable risks. What is the result of seeing History and Scripture always in terms of fancy dress and third-rate art? The real things were contemporary and vital. And



will the endless viewing of fifth-rate amusement gradually destroy our critical faculties?

It is a present-day platitude to say that the world is getting smaller and we are only a few hours away from anywhere on earth. It is also a fact that in Britain more people are able to have holidays abroad than ever before. (It is equally true that there are also more restrictions on travel—passports, visas, political bans and iron curtains—than our ignorant forefathers would ever have imagined.) Any full education in the mid-twentieth century must take these facts into account. Have we nearly enough stress on the learning of other languages? And what are the priorities within the subject—the ability to speak and understand in order to travel easily, the ability to follow foreign broadcasts, the ability to read foreign books and newspapers? Communication then becomes a part of the section next to be considered: the teaching or acquiring of the spirit of Citizenship.

✓ Citizenship, Civics, Politics, our knowledge of the world we live in and how its various communities work—these must all take an increasingly important place in our educational plans. They are obviously linked with Geography and History which probably will have to form the basis of our teaching at first. Again, we ought to be tentative in our proposals, for how sure can we be that even the Europe of small nations known to us in 1961 will not have entirely changed by 1981? And will Asia and Africa dominate our thought and actions by then? Our teaching is about matters so fluid that conjecture and guesswork are about all we dare attempt. And yet it is desperately important that right attitudes should be formed early enough, and a spirit of adaptability and adventure acquired. A critic may well ask how these desirable attitudes are to be acquired by small boys and girls, and how we can continue to ask for more to be taught. The answer is that much must be eliminated from the older curricula, that vast chunks of the older established English History can be safely abandoned by schools, just as Geographers have largely ceased to notice the mass of facts considered essential for a child to master thirty years ago. A ruthless slaughter of the content of many syllabuses used in schools is urgently needed. Then we have to remember that the school-leaving age is creeping up, and either by voluntary or compulsory means all intelligent boys and girls will be at



school to sixteen before long. Citizenship is largely a study for adolescence.

Closely allied to the interest in Citizenship is that of Vocation and Leisure and to these all Secondary Schools must increasingly pay attention. With good well-planned vigorous teaching the old Elementary Schools could cover the basic common ground of education for intelligent children by the age of thirteen. The years after this may well be devoted to the essentials of contemporary life: the understanding of the world and society in which we live, the planning and training for our work, the understanding and acquiring of tastes for our rapidly expanding periods of leisure.

When *Living Education* first appeared a number of critics were disturbed by the chapter on sex-education and thought the suggestions either impracticable or unnecessary. Today most readers would say it was a most tentative and conservative chapter, one whose general conclusions few would question. The recent researches on the nature of adolescence have shown that it is a period of intense interest in sex and one of great sexual drive and activity. The youth we teach will have its thoughts often dominated by this drive. The problem is no longer whether sex should be mentioned or taught in schools, but what shall be taught at what ages, and how right thinking and conduct can be encouraged.

So with all the above changes in stress and emphasis and with the great reforms now in process about sizes of classes and new schools we still can return to the ideal of the great teacher and the great school. What does a man or woman possess beyond professional efficiency and conscientious application to duty, which can mark him as a great influence in a child's life? What lifts efficiency to greatness? The same question can be asked about our schools. The new palaces arise with fine halls and gymnasia: yet many lack something which made some older buildings with inefficient equipment and antique methods places of beauty and even splendour in the eyes of their pupils. What is it about some schools which makes old pupils willing to sacrifice much in order to send their own children there? What should a 'great school' be today?

We will now proceed to examine these and many other points in much greater detail, to see education as a living and continuous process which is concerned with each of us as long

as we live. To discuss it under different heads, while convenient, has its dangers, for each division tends to become a kind of water-tight compartment. The various sections, however, should rather be regarded as facets of a single diamond, or as different lights illuminating one object. One of the dangers of recent years has been the multiplying of separate subjects and the teaching of separate branches of knowledge by experts who have seen only their own subject. This has tended to create the involved school time-tables through which the wretched child must rush, collecting as he passes masses of homework. There has been little seen of the whole, and the end has been lost in the intricacy of the means. The attempt here is to see education as a whole, as life itself, but in order to do this, being mortal, we have to look at it in sections. With this in mind there should be little difficulty in examining this life in detail, whether it be the life of the body, of the soul, or of the mind, life in a society, in communication, or as a continuing process. Life, to be life, must be more abundant.

*B.A. Fin*



## CHAPTER THREE

### *Physical Education and Health*

IF EDUCATION is concerned with life and living, then it must certainly be bound up with everything connected with Health. This remains as true now as it was when *Living Education* first appeared; yet no chapter is so out-dated. The problems which were there discussed seem largely to have disappeared or to have changed in their relative importance. Before attempting to state what I feel to be the role of Health Education today, I perhaps may be forgiven for giving a personal account of what it meant for a teacher in 1930.

The school in which I taught was one of the three-storied buildings erected for the School Board for London at the end of the nineteenth century. The Senior Boys' Department was at the top after a stiff climb up stone staircases. Strict control was always necessary to avoid accidents on these staircases, so those who attempted to run or jump were caned. In schools where the control was poor there were nasty accidents. The rooms were rather dark, were painted chocolate or other deep colours, and the low hanging gas lamps seemed always to have broken mantles. The lamps were noisy when used and inefficient at the end of dark afternoons. A central Hall served for assemblies, drama, singing and physical training. It was also the main passage-way between rooms. The noise from the Hall always invaded the surrounding classrooms. (Mercifully, however, classes were not endlessly distracted by seeing people pass up and down corridors, nor were we overlooked by people in the streets as in the more wretched of modern-designed schools like huge goldfish bowls.)

The four hundred children of our department came from a few surrounding streets in the poorest neighbourhood of North London. It was said that at one time a quarter of their parents were in prison—an exaggeration. But prisons, Borstals and 'being put-away' formed a substantial part of every child's knowledge, or background, or gossip. Real poverty was always

with us: many children's clothes were pathetic, food was often scarce or of very poor quality and variety, and many children seem regularly to have been fed by being handed hunks of food at their doors to be eaten in the streets. The senior children had to get away from school quickly in order to collect smaller brothers and sisters from the Junior and Infants' Schools. Some of them seem consistently to have had appointments at various clinics or the Royal Free Hospital. A good school in such a district became a centre of social welfare, perhaps the only civilizing influence in the area. To the Head and Staff came numerous parents, not only with problems of food, housing, delinquency, but with legal matters and the endless miseries of the overcrowded rooms they occupied.

A great deal was done through the schools for the worst cases. School dinners could be arranged for those in great need, milk at a small charge or free was distributed each day; some children were given cod-liver or halibut oil. We had savings clubs for boots and clothes. Arrangements were made for country holidays for some children each summer. We organized School Journeys and obtained assistance from the London County Council and other sources to help pay for them. A constant watch was kept on children who should have been wearing spectacles, and we held remedial classes to exercise those with foot complaints or spinal curvatures. There seem to have been endless dental inspections and even some children under pressure having treatment. There were, of course, the usual medical inspections and visits of the nurse to enforce cleanliness. We had lessons on Health Education and stressed the need of baths, washing, cleaning teeth and regular exercise. We had Physical Training periods for each class a few times each week, weekly visits to Highbury Fields for organized games, and almost endless swimming-classes. There were, of course, no shower-baths, and the washing facilities in school were very meagre.

Slowly we won the battle of getting boys to change for Physical Training, but it took great pressure and encouragement to get all shirts off, even on hot days. I usually spent a little time after P.T. in the hall getting splinters out of feet or hands, because the wooden block floor was rough.

The above account is probably typical of the life in any lively school in a large town thirty years ago. In a real sense



the main stress could well be on Health Education and an attempt to remedy some of the evils of the basic poverty of the life of the neighbourhood.

Largely the problems have disappeared today as the revolution of English life has taken place. (Some schools still have, of course, some of the difficulties already described, but another decade should see the changes completed.) The new schools are light and airy; they have good gymnasia with shower-baths and washing-accommodation; school dinners and free milk are available for all. Medical rooms are available for examinations and there should be better follow-up for those needing dental and other treatment. Special Schools are available and transport provided for those physically or mentally handicapped. School Journeys and School Camps are increasing. The general rise in the standard of living has made it possible for nearly all children to be well clothed and fed. School uniforms are common in all types of school, so that from appearance it is now difficult to guess what type of school a child attends. What then is the meaning of the term 'Health Education' today?

The School is now obviously part of the facilities of the Welfare State and will remain linked to the Medical Service. School meals and milk supplies are essentials. All these kinds of thing may well be extended in the future and we may expect a separate staff largely to deal with them. But as educators we are slowly learning that amelioration of poor conditions is not enough. Health is concerned with body, mind, and spirit, and all are inextricably mixed. If we are slowly learning the meaning of a healthy body, we have yet much to learn about healthy and alert minds, and healthy outlooks and ideals. Delinquency and neuroses are as much bad health as twisted backs or poor eyesight. The school must cater for the health of the whole person, and we must strive again to recapture the enthusiasm of the Greek civilization and something of the ideal that we see in its sculpture.

It is essential that school buildings should continue to be improved, and better facilities provided for sports and swimming; it is equally essential that teachers should be people of good character, cheerful personalities, and adventurous outlook. To be this they must be freed from financial irritations and a sense of grievance about salaries; they must be well



trained, feeling themselves the master of their subjects but humble enough to be still learning; and by some means they must be kept fresh in outlook and saved from the besetting dangers of their profession—boredom and cynicism due to endless routine and being constantly in contact with immature minds. In a sense then, Health Education should not be regarded as a subject or even aspect of school life: it is rather the basis of its very existence, the atmosphere in which teachers and pupils live.

Yet the term must also have some more precise meanings. With pupils staying at school until they are sixteen and having some education for some years later, it is surely only sense to spend more time in learning how our bodies work and the best means of maintaining physical good health. More about simple First Aid and the treatment and prevention of common complaints should be directly taught. It also goes without saying that even more attention must in future be given to discovering any physical defects in adolescents and to their immediate treatment.

It is difficult for a layman at present to say what are the ends of present-day Physical Education periods. In the early part of the century, classes had their daily or weekly periods of Drill, and the ability to march in step and form fours was said to inculcate virtues both physical and moral. Later this became gymnastics in many schools and rhythmic exercises in others. Again the *Handbooks of Instruction* made quite extraordinary claims for the virtues then inculcated—team spirit, initiative, poise, assurance, unselfishness, loyalty, as well as alertness and physical efficiency. Most of the older apparatus has now been removed from the gymnasias, while masses of new ladders and climbing apparatus have entered the Infants' and Primary Schools. More robust exercises and Circuit Training have become fashionable for older boys. How far the few short weekly periods enjoyed by each class alters any boys' physique is open to question. Or are the periods simply a physical break from classroom monotony? It may well be that the future sees a revival of older methods again, not for any direct physical improvement, but as a pleasurable occupation for many boys and girls and a window of interest into another form of human activity. There will surely always be a place for good gymnastic ability for its own sake. Whether it is of any value to



make all children, whatever their natural physique, try to attempt any of the set methods used so far seems much more doubtful to many of us. A personal view is that the future may well see a classification of children according to physique and completely different forms of Physical Training developed for each. This will be easier to accomplish in the large Comprehensive Schools which are growing in many areas. In fact, experiments of this kind are already in progress and vast new schools have a group of gymnasia equipped in different ways in order to cope with widely different activities and forms of exercise.

The attention of teachers of Physical Education may well be directed in future to training for the use of leisure time. Everyone agrees that a main problem of future schools will be training pupils to use enjoyably the ever-increasing periods of leisure. It is not going to be done by devoting particular periods on a time-table to the topic. It will largely be accomplished by the examination by every subject teacher of how he can help in the task. The expert in Physical Education holds a key position.

Leisure is available increasingly in longer periods each evening, in longer week-ends, and in longer or more frequent holidays lasting a week or fortnight. It is the task of a school in the future to give all its pupils a taste of possible physical pleasures, and some coaching in the basic skills for those most enjoyed. A boy—or girl possibly—could learn the basic rules and movements of such indoor sports as basketball, badminton, boxing, fencing, wrestling. The large school of the future will have clubs for those who enjoy each of these. Dancing—country, old-time, ball-room—is an obvious art for all mixed schools, and for co-operation between other Boys' and Girls' Departments. Good coaching in the major games, Rugby and Association football, hockey, cricket, tennis, netball, must be available for all, as it must also be for various forms of athletics.

Any Sports Teacher knows, however, the large number of young people who have no real desire to take part in any of these sports. It may be laziness, lack of initiative, or the clear realization that a boy lacks real ability that makes him abandon them. Increase in playing-fields, athletic tracks and suitable halls and gymnasia may be expected in the future, so a larger percentage of young men and women may take part, but it



would be optimistic surely if we forecast that one in every five school-leavers took any active part in sports after five years. There are, however, many other outdoor activities which can be encouraged. Modern means of travel have placed within reach of nearly everyone, seas, lakes, rivers, mountains, moors, or stretches of open countryside. Only a few people as yet know anything of the possibilities they offer. The alert Physical Educationists of the future must offer coaching in camping, cycling, hiking, sailing in various kinds of boats, canoeing, swimming and under-water swimming, skiing and sledging, climbing and scrambling, walking, with the possibility of holidays involving several of these activities. School Journeys may in future include not only the usual visits to places of interest, but trips much farther afield involving arduous travel, discovery, and adventure. Many of the shorter periods of Physical Training may well become practice times for skills needed in organized school adventure courses and holidays.

There are also many sports and activities sensible and available in certain areas, which could well receive encouragement in local schools. Baseball and lacrosse, various kinds of angling and fishing, horse-riding and shooting are all within reach of numbers of young people in certain areas. Again, a small number of older boys will always be interested in body-building and weight-lifting, activities which, until recently, have received little encouragement from orthodox teachers in schools. The development of some national systems of fitness tests may encourage boys in all-round physical proficiency and keen youths of the future may know their standing in such tests of skill as jumping, running, mobility, agilities, strength tests, and gymnastic abilities. There will be a growth of such movements as Outward-bound Schools and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Thus, some of the problems of increased leisure can be solved by the offering of wider opportunities for vastly more sporting activities, but it is in the schools that a taste for some of them can be acquired. We must give up our idea that the prime purpose of a sports master is solely to teach boys to use a straight bat in cricket, or play rugger for his House. In another ten years we may seriously be considering what uses we can make of the car, the aeroplane, and the glider, when our playgrounds have become the mountain ranges, the oceans, and the arctic wastes. This begins to sound like schoolboy

Science Fiction, but really envisages no greater changes than have taken place in the last thirty years.

Health Education has developed from being a matter of adequate food and physical exercises to the task of producing young men and women of fine physique and wide interests, able to take full advantage of the world they live in and anxious to adventure into all the elements surrounding us. Thus can man find a full physical life.

*'Oh, our manhood's prime vigour! No spirit feels waste,  
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew unbraced.  
Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock up to rock,  
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree, the cool silver shock  
Of the plunge in a pool's living water . . .  
How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ  
All the heart and the soul and the senses for ever in joy!'*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robert Browning, *Saul*.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### *Education and Religion*

‘In religion there is something to learn, something to feel, something to choose, something to do, and something to belong to.’—A. VICTOR MURRAY.

ANY INTELLIGENT foreigner may well despair when he tries to understand our English Education system: Public Schools which are private, Public Schools which are free, Church Schools, Voluntary Schools, Aided or Controlled Schools, Grammar Schools, Direct Grant Schools, Council Schools, Nursery, Primary, Secondary, Technical, Multilateral, Bilateral, Comprehensive, High—to name only a few varieties. He will also find that only one in a hundred Englishmen could hope to explain them to him, and even these would prefer not to enter into discussion about Scotland or Wales. A great number of these schools owe their existence or their individual differences to English religious life and religious controversies through the years. The foreigner might well begin with a course in Church History.

The older English ‘Secondary’ Education sprang from the Church, and the elementary education of the masses was largely inspired in the nineteenth century by the Churches or those with religious and humanitarian principles who reacted against current orthodoxy. That century saw unparalleled expansion of elementary education as well as bitter religious controversy chiefly centred on education. It has left us with a curious system of balanced control of schools by a Local Authority and the various Churches (Chiefly Anglican and Roman Catholic, but also a few owned by Methodists and other Free Churches). The finance is again involved, balancing grants from the Local Authority and the Ministry of Education, while the Churches still own and partly maintain the buildings. The Education Act of 1944 was considered a masterpiece of skilful reform and compromise when it managed to retain this

involved system and effect changes without upsetting any particular Church.

The success of the Butler Act may have shown the growth of a spirit of toleration in English life: it may also have shown how apathetic and indifferent ordinary people had become. Any examination of popular opinion shows that the ordinary parent wants his children to have some religious instruction and learn something of worship; he may also like his children to attend Sunday Schools; but he has no intention of going to Church himself except for special family occasions or for Special Services such as those at Harvest, Christmas, or Easter. All kinds of reasons have been given for this indifference. I believe that the root cause is that he no longer believes what he thinks the Church teaches. He believes that Science has shown the miraculous to be impossible, and that the Christian story though doubtlessly beautiful and soothing, is not really true. Christianity is harmless, pleasant, and irrelevant today.

These woolly and often unformulated opinions are at the back of the minds of the ordinary 'working man'. In many towns not one is seen regularly in any church. Regular church attenders come from the Middle Classes, the better educated section of the community, women, and young people. (I am generalizing a little dangerously on the Protestant Churches I know.)

The reasons which can sometimes be discovered for this basic lack of faith are generally fifty years behind contemporary intelligent thought. The 'ordinary man' feels that we ought to live by reason, we ought to examine facts carefully, look and listen dispassionately and so come to clear conclusions. Better education is helping us to do that. Then Science has shown us that the universe runs on unalterable laws and principles, and if we were clever enough we could find the right pages in the right books which would answer our questions. There is no need for faith when the simple answer may come up at any time on the 'telly'. Then again, nobody now believes those old Bible Stories to be true—except for Roman Catholics and other peculiar people who are prepared to swallow anything. It is better, he feels, to stick to solid facts, and let those who like old-fashioned ways carry on going to churches. Live and let live, and it takes all sorts to make a world.

If I am right in believing that the present religious apathy



comes from those beliefs, then it is the more curious that they should be held so strongly when the intellectual climate has changed so completely. It is easier to justify religious belief and teaching today than at any time in the last century. And if belief in God cannot be proved, yet the older rationalism and unbelief is surely gone. Today no intelligent person holds that older simple belief in the power of clear cold reason. We find individually that we approach every problem with minds already prejudiced or influenced by our upbringing, our education, our politics, our self-interests. We need to be saints in order to be truly objective.

The old view of scientific law has also disappeared. No longer dare we expect to find external truths on set pages of old, school science text-books: we can hope only for present-day summaries of observations which will possibly some day be altered or modified. How many exact scientific facts and laws will be precisely the same in another century? Our solid world has become a complicated system of whirling energy, and we have no words properly to describe it. The Science which today is dominating our world is a dynamic and changing force, and one which needs increasing numbers of experts in increasing fields even partially to understand.

Two other factors have helped to change the climate of belief for many people; some of the findings of those engaged in psychical research, and Jungian psychology. Investigators such as Rhine in America seem to have established that some forms of telepathy occur, and that there are plenty of examples of precognition and the influence of matter by thought. The results are curious, spasmodic, and upsetting for those who demand a neat and ordered course of nature. It is obvious that much more investigation is needed, that we know little of conditions which favour telepathy or precognition; it is also obvious that if there is any truth in these ideas, then the bottom has gone out of the old-fashioned materialism.

Such ideas too may link up with the findings of Jung psychology, asserting that our minds at some deep level are interconnected, and that we all may be influenced by forces in some vast group or race unconscious.

Thus, numbers of separate ideas current at present are favourable towards any study of spiritual life and activity. Faith has not returned to our age, but it no longer looks irrelevant or



absurd, and an investigation or study of religion would seem a wise part of any good education.

Whatever may be the deep reasons, there is no doubt that the Education Act gave great encouragement and impetus to religious education in all State schools. The school-day must begin with corporate worship, and some religious teaching will be given to all children each week. This may be from an Approved Syllabus drawn up in each district by representatives of the various Protestant Churches, or of more doctrinal nature in Church Schools. The most urgent need at present is for far more convinced and able Christian teachers to deal with the subject. Where these exist in schools the teaching of Divinity (or Religious Instruction, or Religious Knowledge, or Scripture—it seems impossible to use the same term in any two adjacent schools) is often good in itself and a fine influence on the general school life. Where unfortunately these are absent, or where good people are trying to teach with insufficient knowledge, the results may be disastrous. Children grow up feeling that faith is intellectually ridiculous.

✓ What then should we mean by the term Religious Education in schools? I suggest that it may well be considered as having three aspects: that of knowledge, that of feeling, and that of action and striving.✍

First of all in elementary schools Biblical Instruction was given. It was assumed that children were entitled to know something about the Bible, the characters and stories of the Old Testament, the life and teaching of Christ. On the whole this factual teaching has been conscientiously and efficiently given. In the course of time the syllabus of most schools has become more sensible, and the masses of facts concerning Syrian geography and Middle Eastern history once memorized have at least diminished. It has seemed much easier to do this teaching effectively in the Primary and Infant Schools: children can thrill to the stories of ancient heroes, of virtuous Davids slaying giant Philistines, and Daniels unharmed in the midst of lions. (Stories can be dramatized, models made, pictures painted, carols sung, and pageants arranged. It is all interesting, educative, and effective.)

(The work with older children is much more difficult. Certainly more detailed study of the Prophets, Gospels, and Epistles is possible, and the growth of idea about God and Man.



can be traced, if the teacher is good enough.) But there are many pitfalls; for only the more able pupils think clearly about these abstract ideas. For others there are ways of escape—some as dangerous as they appear seductive. More detailed history may be studied: it will at least lead to activity with date charts and visual aids. Much more geography can be inflicted: maps of Palestine and the Middle East may appear at every lesson and Bible Atlases abound. Again, great stress can be placed on details of Hebrew life at the time of Christ and the accurate background to every parable be examined. All this may be excellent of its kind, but it may become a mere escape from Religious Teaching. The boy leaves school wondering why so much pedantic detail of social life and knowledge of ancient tribal customs is considered relevant to twentieth-century England. All this may be strictly true—so what?

Even with better teaching it is possible to doubt the good effects of so much visual illustration. There is something to be said for a good sound-broadcast where we hear—for example—the question 'Who is my neighbour?' discussed. The problem can be made clear in contemporary English. We know the parable is set in the past, and our imagination may throw in a little stage setting, but the problem, the incident, the answer, are alive and present with us. The temptation of present teaching is to spend time on the position of Jerusalem and Jericho to find them on maps and note the difference in sea-levels. Exact pictures of a particular road and mountain pass can be exhibited, followed by pictures of various gentlemen in fancy-dress with excessive beards. Priests' garments can be shown with absolute accuracy, and ancient inn life and customs depicted. The original vital problem is forgotten. The Bible stories, like too much of our history, are associated with fancy-dress figures completely remote from our own age, thoughts, or customs. Actually the problems and people were once living and contemporary, and to be of value must again become living and contemporary to us. The mass of scripture illustrations suffer too from being badly printed and coloured reproductions of fifth-rate sentimental art.

The difficulties so far described are, of course, only the superficial problems which an intelligent teacher can face and partially overcome when he admits and faces the dangers. (There are much greater difficulties when teaching older pupils.)



Unless we are to take up the fundamentalist position of 'The Bible says this, so these words are true as they stand', or 'The Church teaches this so we must accept it', the problem of what we teach as true is very real. Few now will be troubled about the stories of creation and most teachers will probably overcome the difficulty of accepting Old Testament stories of miraculous events as exact accounts of historical fact. What are we going to do with the miraculous happenings in the Gospels and the Acts? (With able older pupils it becomes possible to discuss the various forms of truth, to find value in myths and legends and poetic descriptions, to show that faith is possible while we hold various shades of belief in miracles. But the less able pupils feel that we are 'hedging' in our answers and refusing to draw lines between what we believe and what is false. On the other hand we can show a variety of opinions to them and refuse to commit ourselves entirely.) A great number of intelligent and sensitive teachers feel the difficulties of their accurately balanced position. Has a satisfactory way been found of putting over the best contemporary belief—even if anyone dare formulate it clearly? ✕

(Possibly our duty is to show the problem of belief clearly and truthfully, and help our pupils to face the fact that there are no simple answers and clear-cut replies to all questions in life.) Maturity will lead to more and more questions and difficult positions to be faced. Some answers may never appear, but search is not fruitless. Teaching which suggests that 'Teacher' or 'The Church' has all the answers may be far more dangerous.

There is no doubt that 'Religious Education must mean the acquisition of knowledge about the Bible, the Christian faith, the Church, and other faiths. The amount will depend on the pupils' abilities, interests, and length of time in schools. Some problems are surely for older pupils only, just as some can only be appreciated by adults. )

Good teachers are on the whole reasonably successful in imparting the factual side of the subjects they teach, and Divinity teachers are no exceptions. Yet particularly in this subject we feel that information and knowledge are not enough.) Religion is about our attitude of reverence towards what is good in the universe and our attitude towards our fellows: Christianity about Love—love of God and love of men. Love is a word used for many activities and emotions, but is



undoubtedly about feeling. What can a school do to inculcate right feeling in its pupils? A very small part of this will be done by direct instruction.) To take an analogy—(we may tell children to love beauty and appreciate art and suggest ways of doing it, but if at the same time we keep them in shabby and untidy rooms with walls covered with old posters and dog-eared drawings, with windows full of jam jars full of grubby insects in green water or faded bunches of flowers, we shall be indeed fortunate if we have any great success.) We may succeed where teachers are naturally careful about decoration, flower arrangements, colour schemes, when pictures are changed at intervals and naturally discussed as things of considerable interest. To live with the right people in the right conditions is the essential thing. The same is true of Religious Education. (Children acquire a sense of value from their teachers. If the teacher has real enthusiasm for poetry and literature, for art and beauty, this will show in all lessons and activities. If the teacher has a vital religion himself, charity and understanding towards his colleagues and pupils, and personally gives service to great causes, his pupils will know and respect and imitate. The real religious education will come to the child as he shares in daily activities with a good person.)

✓ A good headmaster will realize at once how much depends on the whole tone of his school, how essential it is that it is a place of understanding, justice, cheerfulness, and service for all. He will plan his assemblies for worship with the utmost care, and try to secure the help of his Staff in keeping an atmosphere of reverence. If he is fortunate he will secure the help of his Staff with good music, good singing, fine readings, and variety of prayers and talks. (The best schools have a short period each day which sets a keynote of interest for its pupils, and which welds the school together as a family or community. Some of the services on some occasions will be taken by the pupils themselves. There seems no reason why the Assembly should not be followed by short notices or news which affects the whole community. The family should be interested in the activities of its members, though it may well be relieved of a daily recital of its shortcomings.)

When asked about memories of school-days pupils who have left school very frequently recall the outstanding events when the whole school was together for some special purpose.



Increasingly these events are being carefully organized in good schools. The Prize Day is not solely an occasion when the brightest pupils are given ovations before the eyes of proud parents, but it can also be an occasion when all pupils are at their best, when all can rejoice in school successes, all listen to someone of some distinction from outside the school, and many take part in helping with music, drama, or general entertaining of guests. In the widest sense it can be a religious occasion. Very many schools now have annual Carol Services, Harvest Festivals, Leavers' Services, or services for some special event, all of which can be carefully planned to add interest, colour, and some excitement to the regular religious routine. Many headmasters use the BBC Services for schools as occasional breaks from the usual assembly, and some invite outside speakers to join the assembly from time to time.

(Thus, apart from direct instruction in religious matters, a good school can through its services and periods of worship add interest and zest to the child's day. Music, art, literature, drama, and nature can join in making occasions when eyes are lifted from the chalk of the classroom to the hills of inspiration which surround us.)

A religious life, however, is much more than information about the Bible, and emotional thrills sometimes found in services or the arts. The ordinary man generally equates it with morality and the kind of service to others that is given. It consists, of course, of all these aspects, and weakness in any one branch leads to weakness in the whole. The success of religion in a school is shown naturally in the standards of behaviour of the place (It should lead to a life in school where people—teachers and pupils—are considerate of one another, where courtesy and kindness prevail, where truthfulness and justice are accepted as natural parts of life, where fine work and high endeavour are admired and imitated, where both a spirit of adventure and service for others are integral to daily routine. Such conditions should lead pupils gradually to arrive at personal standards of right and wrong, to examine opinions contrary to their own, and while condemning wrong-doing to begin to appreciate the motives of others with understanding and sympathy.) All this sounds exceedingly difficult—the kind of thing we may hope to acquire in a lifetime for ourselves: yet in an elementary way a good school goes a long way towards



it. At its best the English school has probably as high a moral and ethical tone as is ever again found in any walk of life.

But religious education is trying to do more than merely producing boys and girls who behave with decency and decorum and who show consideration to others. Christians go into a wicked world not only as harmless as doves but being also told to be as wise as serpents, to be the salt of life, and the leaven in the mass. (In some way religious training must lead to the production of alert and able young men and women, concerned about the problems of the world, and determined to take an active part in solving them.) An increase in crusading zeal and burning sense of purpose might bring salvation to the next decades, after a period in which the favourite—if slightly ironic—phrases have been, 'I'm all right Jack', 'You've never had it so good', 'I couldn't care less', 'So what?' (It is essential that the citizens of tomorrow should feel their responsibility towards those less fortunate in this country and abroad, to realize that at this moment two out of three people in the world suffer from malnutrition, that there are forty million refugees, that half the people in the world can neither read nor write.) A true religious education must lead to a determination that these conditions must not continue and we must help to right them at whatever cost. It must lead to an appreciation of the responsibilities of citizenship, and to the necessity of thinking people taking an active part in politics and world affairs. It must lead to a vital concern for peace—peace between nations and peace between sections of the community, peace which springs from justice and fair opportunities for all nations and individuals.)

✓ In what ways can a school begin to achieve these objects and not let these ideals be the mere platitudes of a headmaster's talks? Such a spirit of concern for others will be nurtured not only in direct scriptural instruction but in history, geography, and science periods, when facts are learned and discussed. It will, of course, be reinforced by talks in assemblies, by lessons on current affairs, by discussions and comments in all kinds of lessons. It will be the natural consequence of living with people who are both concerned and informed about these matters.

In many small ways children acquire a habit of service for others—even small children in collections for worthy causes,



in gifts for unfortunate children at Christmas, in gifts at Harvest Festivals, in letters and presents when members of a class are ill. It may lead as they grow older to service in clubs, churches, Sunday schools, Scouts, in work for improvements in the school. It is reinforced by opportunities of helpfulness and work for others during school journeys, school visits, and various school and local events. Any list appears trivial in detail, yet it is from the attitude acquired in such small beginnings that Christian citizens are formed.

With the school-leaving age being extended and many pupils receiving education voluntarily to a later age, there are far more opportunities for direct discussion of religious principles. The older Scripture lesson may well become a period when Christian ideals are examined. Before leaving, but when they are old enough to realize the problems, boys and girls should consider the questions of conduct in modern society. There are the problems of peace, of honesty in work, of sexual morality, of road safety, of drink and gambling. What is a Christian attitude to these? The time to begin to face those problems is during the last years at school. Then, too, the wise teacher sees that some of the doubts and problems of faith are brought into the open, and not left to be thrust upon the boy starting work in the more hostile atmosphere of the factory or workshop. It is said that there are four main questions which still cause many to lose their belief in God: that of science and religion, that of the inconsistencies of religious people, that of the factual truth of Bible stories, and that of reconciling the goodness of God with the suffering and pain of the world. It would be foolish to pretend that a teacher can meet these and solve them on the spot, but he can at least show that they are problems to thinking people and there are many intelligent approaches to the answers. Let them be first found in the calm and kindly atmosphere of the school.

(So a good school will encourage its pupils to think clearly and try to discover the truth about the world we live in and the problems we face.) It is also fortunate when it finds some particular corporate objective towards which all its members can strive or for which they can work. Religion, then, which began as simple instruction, can be seen as a force demanding the thought and service of all and resulting in that fellowship which springs from a common purpose.



( Thus, and in very many other ways, the religious spirit in education can flourish by inspiration and emotion, by clear knowledge and straight thinking, and by expressing itself in multitudinous forms of action. Regarded in this light, it is seen to be all-embracing, including every subject and every period, and affecting the life lived out of school. It can be the real dynamic of the school, making it into a family, and giving it, not only purpose, but power. It will always hold up the essential Christian virtues of love, service, self-sacrifice, pursuit of truth, good craftsmanship, and humility, when each person finds true self-expression in creative activities for others. An education based on these beliefs has every chance for expansion and enlightened progress. It aims to turn out into the difficulties of reconstructing a tottering civilization a generation of citizens who have the true Christian characteristics, not of fear, but of power and love and of a sound mind. )

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *Education and Communication*

*Mr Benbow's a very good man.  
He tries to teach us all he can:  
Reading, writing, and 'rithmetic,  
And if we don't learn them he gives us the stick.*

THIS NOBLE rhyme expresses clearly the duties of a teacher at the time when elementary education began: His job was to teach children to read, write, and do simple arithmetic, and if he was energetic, he could soon accomplish his task. Later in the nineteenth century inspectors visited every school to test each child according to its age, in these subjects, and having measured every one with their yardstick, authorized payment of the teacher according to the results. Other subjects appeared on the time-tables of the better run schools, but the 'three Rs' remained the bed-rock of elementary education. Their dominance, partly due to the fact that the teachers' salaries were based on their efficiency in teaching them, has been the keystone of education in English schools ever since, and to many eyes other subjects have appeared as luxuries.

Regrets at this undue stress should not blind us to the fact that the 'three Rs' are essential in any good scheme of education; for no child can be called educated without them. They form a means of communication between man and his fellows, and it is in this light that they will be discussed here. In many respects we are bound to admit that very largely the early ideal is now carried out. Children go to school and in a few years all, except the most backward, can read, write, and work simple sums. The various methods of achieving this success and the general excellence of the teaching need not be dwelt on here, though as time goes on, doubtless still further progress will be made. Instead we will turn to the subject of communication between man and man. How far is this being perfectly achieved,



and what are the chief means to this end? Much that I wrote in 1944 remains true today—in fact some points are even more important.

The chief means of communication among people everywhere is speech, a subject almost completely overlooked until recent years. The government of the country was carried on, and all important positions filled by men who had been educated at Public Schools, and their speech formed the standard English of the time. Poorer people largely used local dialects, or a speech strongly coloured by dialect. Late years have seen the class system of government breaking down, with the universities and higher administrative posts being filled by young men and women from secondary schools. Better and longer education, much greater facilities for travel, the growth of the cinema and wireless, have done much to level out speech differences, so much in fact that many people have become concerned about the disappearance of dialect from English life and the resultant standardization of speech. The brutal fact remains that the best positions in life and the better paid posts go to people whose speech is like that used in Public Schools and not to those speaking like the poorer classes in the back streets of large towns.

The Public School boy acquires the assurance and carriage indicative of his own self-confidence, the manners and graces necessary for polite social intercourse, but these virtues are most clearly to be observed in his fluent and 'accepted' speech. When he opens his mouth other members of his class recognize one of their own kind and conduct themselves accordingly.

That speech is enormously important socially was brought home to me by two incidents: first, when having tea with an old pupil in North London, he told me of a cousin who had just obtained a high position in the Police Force.

'That's a job which ought to suit you,' I said.

'I could never get anything like that,' he replied. 'My speech would finish my chances. If half the time spent on teaching me to write and do arithmetic had been spent in teaching me to speak well, all my life might be different.'

I recalled to him the fact that numerous Cabinet Ministers spoke the language of Scotland, Yorkshire, and Devon, while everyone professed to find such speech refreshing.

'Let them try the language of Hackney and Bethnal Green in the higher Civil service,' he said.



Secondly, its importance was forced upon me when another old pupil returned to school one Friday afternoon. He was a rising professional boxer and we were able to have an assembly and let him demonstrate to the boys. To the admiration of all, he stripped and began to shadow-box, exhibiting a physique, carriage, and looks which would have made him an outstanding figure in any class of society. Then he began to talk—a mass of glottal stops, dropped aitches, jerks, and splutters, scarcely intelligible even to London boys. His nervousness increased his incoherence, of course, but the bitter fact remained that his class was branded on him for life. He was unable to make a simple statement in plain English.

When in the Royal Air Force I asked many young men what needed more attention in schools, one wrote:

Although the English standard at the majority of schools is high, not enough importance is attached to speech. A high standard of speech at present is the hall-mark of an exclusive and expensive education, and many otherwise well-educated persons find their speech a handicap. Where good spoken English is so often the key to success, especially where interviews are concerned, I think that, if a little more time were devoted to this subject, it would fill a gap felt by many in their education.

The arguments against teaching a kind of standard English are that it would be a pity to abolish dialect and still worse for everyone to speak like the announcers of the BBC. Good speech, however, does not imply this, though it may be asserted at once that a BBC announcer is intelligible to all in every part of the country and is also able to speak rapidly and clearly. Much of this dialect worship is mere sentimental snobbishness. We like to hear the people of a particular countryside speaking 'in their own rich brogue' when we are on holiday, but we should be horrified if we thought that we always spoke like them. Our love of dialects, too, tends to be snobbish or at least partial: we all profess to enjoy hearing a touch of Scottish or Cornish or Yorkshire, yet few pretend to admire the dialect of London, Birmingham, or the Black Country. That dialects should disappear would be a great pity, yet not so sad as the present fact that rigid class distinctions are perpetuated because of our differences in speech.

Good speech need not imply that dialects must die. It is a



fine thing if a man living in Worcestershire or Durham can speak his own dialect when he wishes, but he should be able to speak something like standard English—the English of educated people in his own part of the country—when it is called for. There is no reason why his ‘standard’ English should not also betray traces of the ‘rich brogue’ which add colour to the language. There is, for example, an important distinction between speaking the Scots dialect and speaking standard English with a Scots accent. The vital need is that every child educated in a British school should be able to speak English so that he can move happily in any part of the country and amongst every type of society into which it shall please God to call him. Language must be a means of communication between men and not a barrier.

As this is not a book on language teaching, only a little can be said about the means to our end. In many types of schools and in many neighbourhoods there is little problem: the homes and the general language of people around the child ensure that he acquires a reasonable standard of speech. The problem lies largely in poor areas, in industrial centres, and in villages. Here the school will have a hard battle to counteract the home conditions, and it is vital for the children to realize the great value of good speech. Again and again the whole staff of the school must stress and explain its great importance. Children must have opportunities of listening to good speaking as often as possible—a fact which implies that all teachers must be trained to speak well themselves.

Clarity and good enunciation must be demanded from pupils in all lessons, and they must be given as much oral practice as possible. Many schools could well afford to give more time to oral and less to written work: many reading lessons can have as their chief aim good clear speaking; recitation, verse speaking, and choral speaking can be used; dramatic work is of great value as also are readings by pupils in hall assemblies. The most important thing is that everyone should recognize the importance of speech and begin to acquire a critical appreciation of it.

Where the speech is particularly bad, special periods may have to be set apart for it, so that teachers with a sound knowledge of phonetics can teach the vowel and consonant sounds of standard English and give practice in learning to talk the



accepted language. It is sometimes very helpful to teach the local dialect, translating sentences from English into dialect and from dialect back into English. The most common mistakes of an area can be listed and learned, so that with constant practice of the right phrases the errors are overwhelmed. Finally it can be assumed that when speech is considered as important as arithmetic, means will be found to achieve equal success in teaching it—and good speech is often of more importance than vulgar fractions or decimals.

Reading and writing seem linked together, for there would be little use in writing if no one could read. It is amusing to recall that in the early nineteenth century many schools taught children to read, but not to write, because this was considered to lift them up out of their proper station in life. None has doubted, however, for a century that all children must be taught to read, though this was long interpreted as meaning the ability to say aloud the words in a text-book. 'Children don't read—they bark at print,' said Adams. 'Reading round the class' was the keystone of 'payment by results'. The horrid practice is nearly dead, and in point of fact in some quarters the reaction has gone too far and children can seldom practise reading aloud—a valuable accomplishment when it can be done well. Advance seems to lie along the road of learning to read for content, and learning how to use books and libraries for various purposes. A school has surely failed if it turns out pupils who never want to read anything and who feel lost in a public library. A glance at the numbers using libraries in large towns tells tragically the intellectual poverty of the readers; for the cheaper and more sensational newspapers and books are all to which the mass of our democracy can rise.

On the subject of books in school a quotation from a questionnaire may be of interest:

I suggest that the child should be taught to acquire the virtue of private study. My interest in subjects was often damped by the fact that I could not obtain literature of a simple nature. There seemed to be two types of books only, those which were, it seemed to me, to be below my own standard, books written in infant-school style, and those which were crowded with technicalities and higher mathematics. Schools should possess libraries able to cater in all subjects for all ages.

The new generation must be taught to handle books as their



natural tools, to be completely at home in libraries and with works of reference, and to be able to enjoy reading according to their natural tastes and bent. The first thing for schools to do is to provide for more books of every type and to possess good libraries of their own. From quite early years children can be taught to use indexes and works of reference, and they should become accustomed to looking up facts of history and geography (for example) in several books before writing answers. They can be taught the simple elements of the reference systems and usual arrangements in libraries. Their reading content must also be widened so that they learn that there are helpful books on all subjects and that, whatever their natural tastes may be, there are books to further their knowledge. In the past school libraries have tended to be overloaded with fiction considered by adults to be suitable, and to be sadly lacking in works on everyday subjects, crafts, sports, current affairs, topical events. Numerous men have told me how they have begun to read seriously after joining the Services, when they discovered to their astonishment that there were books on such a variety of subjects—for very many of the station reference and recreational libraries are excellent.

Many schools in the last few years have had arrangements with their local municipal libraries, so that boys and girls visited them and learned to use them before leaving school. This is a habit that may well be encouraged, and every opportunity seized to show children how great is the variety of books obtainable. Very many famous men in the past have expressed the view that their real education came from wide reading in their father's or some available library. The school must supply this facility for those who develop that way. Each teacher of every subject must see that his own section of the library is plentifully supplied with books and that full use is being made of them by his pupils. Probably more individual work ought to be attempted, and children taught to search out facts and knowledge for themselves rather than listening to ceaseless lectures.

Fortunately the last few years have seen a considerable improvement in most school libraries, both in Secondary and Primary Schools. Some are indeed excellent with attractive book-cases, pleasant chairs and tables, good pictures and bright wall-papers. One has only to glance inside to see the



most attractive room in the school. I have been quite astonished in some Primary Schools at the industry and enjoyment of the children working at the tables and consulting books from the shelves. Some of these pleasant new school libraries are in old buildings, where the head teacher has been helped by enlightened officials of Local Authorities. Books unfortunately are expensive and my only personal criticism would often be that not enough are yet on the shelves. The position, however, must now improve from year to year if sufficient grants are made available to the schools.

Reading in the classroom can have much more variety than has often been the case, and older pupils can be trained to read for content and to acquire the art of judicious skipping. When there are wide opportunities of reading, the literature periods can often become 'appetizers' for good books, with the teacher reading extracts and giving a kind of review of them.

Reading for older pupils must also become critical reading, for the citizens of a democracy need training in the recognition of rubbish, propaganda, and specious arguments. Much can be done by the study of newspapers and periodicals, which should surely form part of every school library. The critical study of current events can do much to overcome the old feeling that schools deal only with matters remote from life. Skilful teachers have already made great use of newspapers for this purpose, first obtaining an objective statement of an event or speech and then comparing the accounts in various journals in order to note the importance given to different facts. Wall newspapers made by the assembly of cuttings can be compiled strikingly to illustrate these facts, and the various exercises can often be as good for a study of history or citizenship as for English. Such examinations are excellent methods of learning to appreciate the political and economic colouring given to events by the Press. The habit of reading critically and of looking behind all impassioned statements for objective truth cannot too soon be acquired.

Thus, the school's job is not only to teach children to recognize words, but to give them every opportunity to develop taste and discrimination in their wide variety of reading. No education can have failed if it has turned out its pupils with a love for reading and has shown them how they may continue to obtain books. It must also aim at producing discriminating



readers who will always examine arguments, weigh up evidence, sift facts, and insist on full information before giving a balanced judgement.

It is unfortunate that in order to discuss matters logically we so often have to examine them separately, thus apparently creating a new subject or compartment. The second of the 'three Rs' is writing, but it is not intended to give it any detailed treatment here, because writing enters into nearly every chapter of this book and is discussed in various ways. Naturally a child has to learn to write, to form words and make simple sentences, and the majority, in fact, do learn to do this with tolerable success. During the extra years at school, writing will largely be done for separate subjects, which should help to kill the old heresy that good writing is a kind of luxury, a literary flourish to be added to a statement of facts. The aim must be clarity, lucidity, and simplicity. Good, truthful statement of fact must be demanded in all subjects, and this can be partially obtained by the practice of wider and more critical reading. The true scientist ought to write excellent English.

Some schools might give more practice in writing letters, postcards, simple notes, and telegrams—exercises which follow the normal person about all his life and which many always do badly. Writing, like all other school subjects, must be shown to be intimately connected with life.

The last of the 'three Rs' is arithmetic, a subject which has always held enormous importance in the eyes of teachers generally. The best periods of every day are usually devoted to it, and in some schools chances of promotion from standard to standard have depended largely on ability with figures. It has always been beloved by teachers because it is an ideal subject to test. It offers itself on a plate for examinations. In my opinion, there is no danger of it assuming too little importance in the eyes of educationists in the future, and in many schools less time rather than more will have to be given to it. We have only to examine many text-books to see how remote from any problems met in life are multitudes of the exercises set. The range of the problems and examples is not too great, and, in fact, it could well be expanded in many schools (many never touch simple graphs, formulae, triangles of velocity, simple logs), but the problems to be worked should be confined to numbers and events likely to be met in real life.



For example, vulgar fractions, if confined to numbers likely to be met in actual work, need not take too long to teach, but we find in many books exercises containing the most involved constructions and fantastic figures ( $179\frac{3}{53} - 243\frac{5}{119} + 327\frac{4}{73}$ ) as well as pages devoted to muddled problems of mixed signs and brackets. There may be, of course, some value in being able to work out such problems, but so also would there be in a knowledge of Native African languages or a history of Ancient China. The beloved problems in past years for older children concerned trains travelling from remote places at different speeds and quantities of water entering and leaving cisterns by various taps. More recently I found one in a student's note-book—given her apparently by the class teacher, which gave me extraordinary pleasure.

5 kitchen-maids sat shelling peas. After an hour Ann had  $5\frac{2}{7}$  lb in her bowl, Polly  $3\frac{8}{9}$ , Martha  $4\frac{1}{4}$ , Mabel  $4\frac{1}{6}$ , Ermyntrude  $2\frac{2}{8}$ . What was the total weight in all bowls? If  $4\frac{1}{12}$  lb of unshelled peas were left out of the original 27 lb what weight of empty shells was there?

I presume it can be solved on paper, but I have no idea how those particular weights could in fact be discovered.

The examples given above are exceptional, but examination of very many school books by anyone other than teachers conditioned to such figures and problems will lead to most disquieting reflections. With the stress of so many subjects on the time-table, more common sense has to be applied to the teaching of arithmetic, and the ordinary child's time devoted to those problems which will concern him in everyday life. Naturally, there is a case for mathematics for its own sake, and those with aptitude for figures should be encouraged to continue their studies; there is also the fact to be remembered that machinery, engineering, and scientific and technical subjects, which all demand some knowledge of mathematics, take an ever-increasing place in modern life; but the main point, in my opinion, remains: there will have to be an adjustment in the general teaching of arithmetic and mathematics. A large part of the difficulty of teaching the children who seem to be able to make no progress in arithmetic is that the figures are constantly too large and the problems too involved. We must simplify in order to expand.



Under the general term of 'Means of Communication', the place of language-teaching in schools might well be considered, but it is one about which I have been unable to arrive at definite conclusions. Young men who were questioned were not very helpful; for beyond generally stressing the complete 'uselessness' of Latin and Greek, they were equally divided between saying that even modern languages are largely useless to ordinary people, and that everyone ought to know something of a language other than his own.

The case against teaching French, German, or Spanish in all schools is chiefly the argument from results; so little is achieved for so much labour and time, and, except for those going on to universities, the little learned by others is next to useless. The case is even stronger against Latin and Greek for those who intend to abandon them after a few years; yet with these, as with modern languages, everyone who has studied them long enough is assured of their permanent value. Can enough of value be learned in the possible time available by the age of sixteen? The usual line in the questionnaires is that so little is gained in these 'useless' subjects that the time should have been given to English, or science, or engineering. It is strengthened by the belief that many children have little aptitude for languages.

On the other side it is argued that the characteristic English fault is that of being too insular, and that foreigners in general are much better at languages than we are. In the future we need to know more about other lands, both for commerce and in order to create a sane world, and the first thing is to be able to make ourselves understood. Many people, too, find that even a smattering of a language is useful, and having done some groundwork when young, it is much easier to resume the study in later years. The study of a foreign language is also an aid to the study of English.

Before any general decision is reached, the aims of modern language teaching must be re-examined. In the past there have been four main objects: to enable the pupil to read the language, to have a fuller understanding of another people and their problems, to write the language, and to speak it. This was possibly the order of importance, though naturally there will be a difference of opinion about precedence. Recent years, however, have seen the universal spread of the radio, so that



today, in peacetime, anyone can listen in to almost any country. Thus, it can be argued that for the ordinary person possibly the most valuable gift is to be able to understand a foreign language when it is spoken. Next in importance in the future may be the appreciation of the ideas, aims, and customs of the country, and after this to be able to read, write, and speak the language.

At the same time we have to remember that more and more younger people are going abroad for holidays and with the increasingly better social conditions this habit of travel is likely to expand. We may increasingly have to regard ourselves as citizens of Europe rather than of Great Britain. If so, we surely should have an elementary understanding of some foreign languages. Should this so frequently be French or German? Ought not more schools to be thinking of Russian and some of the Scandinavian languages? If the vast Comprehensive Schools increase there should surely be a number of alternative languages which a pupil might choose to study. It has recently been suggested that some language teaching should begin in the last year of a pupil at a Primary School, and that children at that stage have the energy and keen interest to make rapid progress. There is certainly often a great waste of time after the famous '11 plus examination' and before the child starts in a Secondary School. Most Primary Schools, however, do not have teachers qualified to begin a foreign language (a most important stage in the teaching), but where these are found they might well be encouraged to experiment.

Our methods of teaching foreign languages seem to need a complete overhaul, particularly when applied to children who will have only a few years at the study. It was noticeable during the war that many soldiers who had not been taught French soon picked up enough to hold short conversations and get any information they required: they made many mistakes but they became inaccurately fluent. Those who had spent years in Grammar Schools were afraid to speak because they knew of the many grammatical mistakes they would make: they were completely inhibited by their education. The English passion for grammar is nearly as much nuisance with foreign languages as with English. There is an urgent need for research and then guidance about what can be achieved in a foreign language by children leaving school at sixteen, and how the result is best



obtained while retaining interest and confidence. Further, it must be decided whether for those who are not continuing classical studies to a university standard, Latin and Greek have enough value to be included in the school curriculum.

Finally, it may be asserted that one of the main tasks of education, and possibly its greatest contribution to world peace and happiness, will be to avail itself of every opportunity to break down barriers between class and class, nation and nation, man and man. Every means must be taken; the cinema, the wireless, travel, art, music, sport, literature, all must help towards a great end. Education must bring us all closer together and increase our means of communication. National and international stability and unity can only be built on understanding.

## CHAPTER SIX

### *Education and the Citizen*

IT WAS IRONIC that in the period between the wars, when the great nations of Europe turned to the doctrine of 'State above all', individualism should flourish to such an extent in England. While in Germany, Italy, and Russia masses of the people seemed to find encouragement in the thought that they lived and sacrificed for the State, in England among many there was a decadence formed from an excess of individualism which often became mere selfishness. Everyone grumbled, with some right, about the Government, though large numbers failed to vote at elections or to take any interest in politics. Those who have worked for any political party on election days know how often they have visited houses only to find that voters 'could not be bothered to go out today' or 'were just going to the pictures or the pub' and would 'come another time'. Interest in local politics was even less, and it was the exception to find an elector who would bother to attend a polling booth. At the same time everyone was cynical or critical about 'the Government', and many were constantly using the phrase: 'They ought to do something about it.' It was the duty of 'they' to do a great deal for the individual.

Individualism flourished also in many schools, and under the titles of Freedom or Liberty, to which the adjective 'New' was frequently affixed, a number allowed almost complete licence as regards behaviour, and their directors knew no greater terror than that of causing some repression by a hint of criticism. In wiser institutions teachers were encouraged to take a subsidiary place, and individual or self-instruction became the ideal. Many of these changes were excellent, and much was achieved by the worship of self-expression. The stress too often, however, fell on the first half of the word.

In the years immediately before the war, most people felt the coming crisis, but encouraged themselves to think hopefully



and to cast away disturbing or inconvenient thoughts or facts. After all, 'they' ought to do something about it.

The best educational writers had already sized up the situation and had offered suggestions towards solving the question of education for the individual and for the society; and for this reason the case will not be argued here. It is sufficient to say that, at present, no serious educationist would suggest complete individualism, being rather concerned with the possibility of retaining freedom while serving the community. To do this there has to be a knowledge of the community, of the State and how it is governed, and it is the school which must supply this, training its pupils in their responsibilities as well as their privileges. Let us then examine the question of education in a society under the following aspects: as training in knowledge of the country, in knowledge of world conditions, for living in a particular area, and for life in a society of advanced civilization.

Before writing the original *Living Education* I had the opportunity to ask some hundreds of men in the Royal Air Force about their previous schooling and their chief likes and dislikes of subjects. Mostly these came from the elementary schools where they were educated between 1930 and 1940. It was astonishing to discover that at least 75 per cent gave History as the subject considered most useless or unpleasant. (Very few had had the opportunities of studying Latin or advanced Mathematics, or History might have lost its pride of place.) A sample of the replies is below:

I did not like school at all and was always glad to get away from it, but the things I found most dislikable were history and geography.

History was the most boring of all to me.

I disliked doing history, because I was convinced that the knowledge I acquired in this subject was of no practical use.

Too much time is wasted in teaching dead things like Latin and history that never enter anyone's normal life.

I disliked history because it seemed to be of no practical use.

Ancient history used to bore me quite a lot.

I was always a little afraid when essay writing came round, and I always felt sleepy when we took history.

I could never understand why we had to learn things that had happened years ago.

We were taught too much history.

What I hated most of all was history.

It is surprising that so many should have been bored by history or found it so dull, because, although much can be attributed to bad teaching, there seems no reason why history teachers should be worse than others. The probable reason is that the boys felt that they had to memorize so many facts, names, and dates, all of which were of no earthly use at the present day. It was largely the seeming uselessness of it all that overcame them. In discussions many asserted that their history was all about the Romans and William the Conqueror, though when questioned they were forced to admit that this was only in their early years. Many countered, however, by asserting that they only reached the nineteenth century towards the end of school life, and that their study was then of the first half only of that century. That so many disliked history and considered it to be useless must mean that its teachers have largely failed, and that there should be radical changes in the future. A further selection of answers shows clearly what many young men thought ought to have been done:

Too much attention is paid to things of the past and not enough teaching is allowed for the difficulties of present-day living.

An unbiased course of instruction in the policies of the various political parties would enable people to vote wisely when they became of age, and thus helping to improve social conditions.

General knowledge of present-day topics should be given.

Politics plays such an important part in world affairs that it should be taught more in schools.

Everyone should be taught how each of the present political parties was formed, and also in what type of government each party believes.

Thus, it appears that the critics of history-teaching suggest current affairs and modern politics in its place. In discussions many have explained their own ignorance of the most elementary facts of international affairs, and their equally hazy ideas about English politics. They assert that the schools ought to



have supplied them with facts about modern Germany, Italy, and Russia, so that they can intelligently follow daily events. When it is replied that a knowledge of history is essential to any understanding of the present day, they will agree, but ask for more recent history, questioning the value of knowledge of earlier centuries if nothing is known about events since 1850. To this there seems no adequate reply. History, if it is going to have any value for ordinary people, must surely be related to the present day, and in future this ought to be done with an account being given of events up to the moment. Some of the methods of 'tracing history backwards' may be of great value. Sensible and older pupils, too, must be given the reasons for history-teaching, and have its utility value made crystal clear. As one youth wrote: 'They ought to tell you why they teach subjects and of what use they will be.' This applies most strongly to the teaching of history.

In the last few years I have asked about 1,200 students entering a Teachers' Training College the same questions and although Mathematics and Latin head the list of their dislikes, History is named 215 times. It was, however, the favourite subject of 394 students. When asked what subject students thought ought to be given more attention in schools today, civics or citizenship was named 317 times, easily heading the list.

It seems then that only a small minority of pupils not attending Grammar Schools feel that a study of history has any value, but for those continuing to study it till the age of 16 or 18, although it is disliked by many it is also greatly appreciated by many. Is any real study of History the task of older pupils? Are we all too often trying to make younger children study matters which their age makes them incapable of appreciating? Brighter children accomplish it but their appreciation comes later. We need urgently to consider what history-teaching should mean for boys and girls leaving school at 15 and for those with little academic ability. Is a watered-down Grammar School course of any value? On the other hand attempts to have history-teaching on the development of ploughs, costume, furniture seem pathetic irrelevancies if they are to replace any consideration of man's struggle to find a system of government, to escape from the slavery of dead ideas, to overthrow various tyrannies and find what is meant by freedom. Again, as the school-leaving age rises to 16, will these wider ideals become



possible for any duller pupils? It may well be that the greatest advance to be made in English education in the next few decades is a complete overhaul of what can and should be taught to children of varying ages and abilities. Our methods of organization, selection, and our buildings are all rapidly being changed and improved. Now we must discover what can be taught, and very carefully ask ourselves if much that we do is of any value. No subject needs more rigorous examination than History.

The teaching of modern history and of politics is difficult on account of any teacher's natural personal political bias and his fear of being considered unfair. We also all tend to fear that someone else will unduly influence children towards his own party. These are real dangers, but they are less than those of ignorance. Surely a well-informed and fair-minded teacher can give older children reasonably objective accounts of events, persons, and policies. His prejudices will most likely be well known to his class, and it by no means follows that they will automatically adopt his views. In the solitary instance I have met of a teacher deliberately trying to inculcate his political views, the reverse was the result, so that he became rather a school joke. Some teachers, with classes where friendliness and mutual trust obtain, may well state openly their views and allow their pupils to be more on their guard. Truth and honesty are far less dangerous than some people imagine.

There is a general need also for Civics, direct instruction about the machinery of government and the working of a democracy. One of the methods used to achieve this is to have democratic institutions and elections in the school itself, when officials and form leaders can be chosen following the procedure of a general election with agents, speeches, election campaign, maximum expenditure (on paper), advertising, polling booths, and exact reproduction of the system of counting and announcing the verdict. The whole system will not always be followed for every election, but on occasions the complete procedure is most valuable. Having carried this out, I know what interest it causes in the school, and how well informed on the procedure of elections the boys were afterwards. Mock trials, courts, and councils can also be arranged. It should be possible, occasionally, for public men to visit schools and explain at first hand something of their work, and sometimes outsiders may be



invited to join in school debates and discussions on current problems. The school must try not only to teach the facts about the machinery of State and the part to be played by each individual, but also to prove itself a democracy, and to encourage its pupils to share in its own government and planning. There might well be more school councils and committees composed of pupils in every school. In these, children will begin to learn something of the responsibility that falls on anyone who tries to make laws and rules, and to appreciate the various sides to many questions. Regulations and procedures which a pupil has helped to frame will be observed—or broken—in a different spirit from those imposed from above. These methods have their values, but they also have their dangers: children are not always the best judges of what is good for a school, nor should they ever be taught that a majority decision about difficult topics has any particular value. If a serious medical operation is being considered it is the view of a good surgeon we need rather than a majority decision from the student nurses.

As well as an appreciation of the values of civic life and local affairs there is a vital need for more instruction on international events and world politics.

This may be attempted in history periods, or in times set apart for discussions on current events. Some headmasters may like to have weekly talks to the whole school on topics of present interest, either giving them themselves or getting other teachers or outsiders to speak. Methods of wall newspapers, class magazines, and books of cuttings may also arouse general interest.

A man lives not only in the large society of the world and the country, but also in a local society, the country, the town, the district, the parish; and some knowledge of these requires to be given. Indeed, there is an even greater need for instruction and a revival of interest in local affairs than in national events. The duties, powers, and organization of city, town, country, district, borough, and parish councils must be explained, not only in general theory, but also with close application to local conditions. Future citizens must be prepared to take their place in local government and to have a lively and critical interest in all done round about them. /

School libraries might well contain current local newspapers,



and local councillors should occasionally come to the school to explain something of their work. Exhibitions and demonstrations of local affairs and products should be supported by the school as far as possible. Many of the better history teachers already devote some time to local history, encouraging their pupils to make some personal research into it. This is a method which should be expanded, so that every child knows something of the history, geography, and geology of his own areas, and also is acquainted at first hand with all local places of interest, historic buildings, old churches, picture galleries, and museums. Thus, the inhabitants of any district should in time be in a position to appreciate their surroundings and to get the most out of their own neighbourhood. The school can encourage a healthy local pride, adapting itself to the best customs of its own part of the country.

The society in which we live is not only national and local, but in an advanced state of civilization compared with that of a hundred years ago (that is, if we agree to forget our habit of regression into wars). The life and outlook of most districts were not so different between the thirteenth and early nineteenth centuries as between 1861 and today, and the schools have done nobly in adjusting themselves to this change. It follows then that life for civilized man at present demands a knowledge of science in its broadest sense. Recent years have seen such stress on this that we need only expect a similar development in the future; for just as some mathematics is necessary for the increasing part played by machines, engines, and electricity, so in a scientific age there is a need for at least elementary knowledge of physics and chemistry. Schools have to be equipped with laboratories and apparatus for these studies, and though the study may need to be directed into practical rather than academic lines, it is well for all older children to learn something of scientific methods and outlook, to stress accuracy and seek for objective truth, to learn to experiment and to work on a hypothesis.

There has been in some quarters such a stress on academic studies of physics and chemistry that biology and botany have been overlooked. That has to be adjusted: for it is surely as necessary to know something about the animal and plant life around us as about test-tubes, and heat, light, and sound. The two sides should go together in earlier years, with opportunities



for the more advanced study of biology, botany, and zoology for older pupils.

It is certain that Great Britain is only just waking up to the fact that other countries are far outstripping us in their facilities and time given for the study of science, and that if we are to survive as a great power we must produce far more able scientists and technicians. We need also many more workers for the more lowly branches of these studies, so on both accounts far more energy must be devoted to science in schools. Yet again there is a danger. In our panic to do something quickly about the lack of scientists we may fail to discover exactly what we can do valuably in schools. Is an extension of the old-fashioned science lessons of any use? What exactly are we trying to produce, and what exactly do we need to teach? It is vital that we should try again to answer those questions.

To live in a civilized society today, some knowledge of geography and economics is essential. Geography, taught as it is now by the best teachers, is both an art and a science, and should be in the curriculum of children all the time they are at school; for without it, there is no understanding of current affairs, modern politics, economics, or history. A wide geography syllabus may in some schools embrace all these subjects.

Finally, we have to remember that life in a society is largely made up of the trivial round and common task, of mixing continuously with ordinary men and women around us and in sharing their activities. The school should make this more pleasant, and 'grease the wheels' of life. In the past, little private schools drew numbers of children from middle-class homes because, although their teaching was not good, they did insist on good speech and did instill courteous behaviour and good manners. Without catering for the snobbishness of some parents, all schools must attempt something of this kind, and imbue their pupils with some of the ease and polished behaviour generally attributed to those attending Public Schools.

The growth of evening activities, dances, concerts, debates, and sports, the frequent mixing with parents and old scholars, and where possible the acquirement of courtesy and good manners at a common meal, will all help in this purpose. Good deportment and bearing should result from physical training, country dancing, and dramatic activities, and as has been stressed before, good speech should be the result of

living in a live school. Thus, a school should turn out pupils who feel at ease in the world, who can move freely in any branch of society, and as this is achieved for all, much of the present snobbishness and class distinction will be killed.

The school, then, will cater for the individual, helping him to develop his abilities to the full, and teaching him to express himself more freely and confidently with an understanding of his surroundings. It should give him—to quote the fine phrase from the *Norwood Report on the Curriculum*—‘that prerequisite of all successful pursuit of knowledge, the power and the will to ask relevant questions’. He will also have learned that he has duties towards others, and will take pleasure in sharing the common work and ideals of those around him. He will find personal freedom in service.

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

### *Education and Work*

**D**URING THE last year or years at school the minds of the majority of children are fixed on the life to be led after leaving. A certain period of petty restriction and useless lessons has to be endured, and then real life with real work and earned money will begin. For ever will be ended those periods of useless talk and discussion, pettifogging rules and formalities, stupid essays, and futile arithmetical problems. Reality, adventure, life, all come from leaving school. It would not be true to say that all children feel in this way; for many, especially those holding responsible positions and who are good at sports, feel the extraordinary importance and interest of schools. Yet there are few teachers, even in Grammar and Public Schools, who do not know that masses of their pupils are living chiefly to leave—to get in touch with real life.

When discussions were held with young men in the Royal Air Force and they were asked what subjects or aspects of education needed more attention the replies showed that Vocational Training was the greatest demand. (This was followed by Current Affairs and Sex-education.) Many described how they had looked forward to leaving school as soon as possible and many had done so despite their parents' pleas to stay longer. They had been determined to begin 'real' work. Then at the advanced age of eighteen or nineteen they saw the error of their ways: the good jobs in life went to those who left school later, to those who went to Grammar Schools, and especially to those who attended Public Schools. Would that they had their time again! Would that all schools trained their pupils for good jobs later on, as well as instilling into children the value of such subjects as Mathematics! (Many were then working in Air Force trades which required some mathematical knowledge.) It would be foolish to base too many conclusions on the demands of a particular age group in a particular setting or to place too much importance on hopeful statements which

ignore the fact that children are children and not smaller-sized versions of nineteen-year-olds. But the fact was abundantly clear that increased attention to vocational training appeared to be the great need of English schools.

Particularly to men, but also in a lesser degree to many women, the work to be done in life is of major importance. 'Blessed is he who hath found his work. Let him ask no other blessing,' said Thomas Carlyle. 'What are you going to do when you leave school?' is the constant adult question to older children, strengthening still further the natural tendency to think and dream of the future. Examinations, which have certainly done incalculable harm to many sides of education, have at least often given a tangible object for which children could aim. Here was a definite end, a goal, and for this they were prepared—and encouraged—to work. Other studies were limitless, large vistas over which few could ever expect to travel. The value of general knowledge, of a wide and cultured outlook, of a liberal education, seems to be a kind of phrase-making. Youth craves for concrete proposals, fixed ends, brass tacks.

The idea of a 'liberal education', which was finely discussed by the best brains of the nineteenth century, is a great and noble conception: the educated man should have an intellectual grip on life, an appreciation of everything around him, high standards of conduct, and knowledge to appreciate his environment. At the back of the idea is the ideal product: the 'true' gentleman. Those who have stressed the same ideal in this century have shown that education is designed for men and not for workmen; it is to prepare men to live, and not solely to be good employes. Thus, it is not a school's job to turn out little grocers, tailors, or clerks, but thinking men and women with ability and adaptability to enter whatever sphere of life they choose.

While never forgetting the great value of the ideal of a liberal education, we may think that its extreme advocates have sometimes too narrowly restricted their definition. A true liberal education must be wide enough to include vocational training. This is fairly simple where the vocation is a wide one—the kind usually possible for the upper and upper middle classes. The early training of a doctor, a lawyer, a naval officer, or a teacher, for example, should be a wide and varied general



education, and as their training advances, although it becomes more particularized, it does not become restricted in its scope. Yet how can a vocational training of a factory hand, a railway porter, a road worker, ever be termed a liberal education? The subject remains easy while we consider only the brighter children; it becomes a problem when we remember the average or dull child.

Since 1900 the grammar schools have aimed at keeping their pupils till about the age of eighteen, and have certainly kept all till the age of sixteen. Examinations such as the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate have been taken. The more able—and more wealthy—boys and girls have then gone on to the universities, while the large majority who have not done so have received an education aimed especially at fitting them for so doing.

The curriculum has been largely academic, with the grammar school as the model. Handwork, trade training, wood- and metal-work, crafts and art have all tended to be neglected. Scholarships used to be given to children at the age of eleven in elementary schools to attend the secondary schools, which, thus receiving the brighter children, trained them for the universities or the black-coated professions. The secondary school then acquired a kind of higher social status than elementary schools; its facilities and conditions of work were better; classes were smaller and holidays longer; the teachers were much better paid. Strangely enough, secondary schools have not always insisted on their teachers receiving any professional training. That, and the stress placed on examinations, sometimes produced very dull and unimaginative teaching and masses of very stodgy homework.

Slightly lower in the generally accepted social status came a small number of junior technical schools, art schools, and trade schools, the latter taking children from the elementary schools at about the age of thirteen. In London, for example, the 'Trade Scholarships' were considered of great value and took the 'second cream' away from the unfortunate elementary school, which had already been skimmed of the secondary school pupils at the age of eleven. At the trade schools some general education was continued, but most of the time was occupied with specialized training, varying from engineering to cookery and hairdressing.



In London and some other parts of the country selective central schools were established, aiming at taking children of eleven—largely those who had just missed getting secondary school scholarships—and keeping them till the age of sixteen or over. In these a certain amount of vocational training was done; there were generally excellent classes for woodwork, metalwork, and other crafts; typing, shorthand, and book-keeping were studied; and close contact was kept with local employers. Thus, many pupils obtained good employment.

In the elementary schools the children were leaving at the age of fourteen, too early for much trade training to be attempted. In general, boys during the last years received some training in wood- or metalwork, and girls had courses in housewifery and cooking. Individual schools, of course, differed greatly, adapting themselves to their various types of children and neighbourhoods. Many had most interesting schemes for preparation for working life, but were greatly restricted by the early leaving age.

This then, very briefly, has been the position of vocational training which has developed during this century.

It will be recalled that young men consulted were practically unanimous that no school in the past had done enough about vocational training and that every school in the future ought to do more. It was felt that the school-leaving age was certain to go up, and that when pupils stayed till they were sixteen or had part-time education the need would be even greater. In the last years at school it was suggested that pupils should have more choice of subjects and that trained careers masters were essential. Some quotations from written suggestions may illustrate this:

At the age of fourteen the student should be tested and placed under specialized training for his future career, dependent on his ambitions and physical and mental suitabilities.

One of the most important posts in my school was that of careers master. He gave me some good advice for which I have since been very grateful.

In agricultural areas subjects pertaining to agriculture should be taught, while in towns the business and commercial sides might be introduced.

This is probably sufficient to illustrate a very general view.



It may be noted that the writers have not considered the matter of the vast number of men and women who cannot, at present, hope to work at jobs which require special training. The task of educational planning would be much easier if we could be sure of the kind of society and working conditions for which youth had to be prepared. Must there, as in ancient Greece, always be a 'slave' portion of the nation whose menial work enables others to have liberty? Does a portion of the race prefer this kind of mechanical and repetitive work? The general social question is one for which a definite answer must be given before certain educational advances can be made. However, for a number of people, trade training will be of service whatever the social conditions, and for these the suggestions will apply.

Many writers suggest the kind of vocational training that would be of use, mentioning occupations which fall roughly into three types: crafts, engineering and electricity, and business. They recognize the increasing importance of technical matters in modern life, and continually stress the teaching of various branches of engineering and electricity. The excellence of technical colleges and junior technical institutes for general trades, for building, and for agriculture has shown how successful this kind of training can be when tackled with foresight and adequate equipment. What, then, ought we to demand for the future?

The Education Act of 1944 led to the reorganization of schools under the State System so that before the age of eleven a child went to a Primary School. Then after that age, as the result of certain tests he went to some kind of Secondary School. At first it appeared that the famous '11 plus examination' would result in three types of school: the Secondary Modern School, the Grammar School for those with academic bents, the Technical School for those belonging to the previously mentioned classes. Various examination techniques involving written tests, intelligence tests, interviews, and school reports were tried in different districts, and much energy was devoted to proving to parents that it was not a scholarship to select the able pupils, but a pleasing form of allocation to various types of secondary education, all equally valuable and socially desirable according to a boy's age, ability, and aptitude. Undeterred by the eloquence of Chief Education Officers and Prize Day Orators parents moved heaven and earth to get their children into Grammar Schools.



Excellent new Secondary Modern Schools appeared all over the country and their social status certainly improved as they had equivalent facilities in buildings, equipment, and playing-fields, and their teachers had equal salaries with Grammar School teachers. Freedom from examination gave scope for experiment, and many really excellent schools have developed.

But various factors have undermined the purity of the original plans. Very few Technical Schools have been opened, and various Local Authorities have opened Bi-lateral schools where the Technical side is joined either with the Grammar or Modern School. Some large Authorities such as the L.C.C. have determined to have Comprehensive Schools where all the children of secondary age can be educated. Thus, large Comprehensive Schools have appeared in different parts of the country and these in turn are developing along widely different lines. Then, psychologists have poured scorn on the idea that children can be divided into three types at the age of ten, and have proved that a considerable number of children are always wrongly classified in any known tests. This has either proved the need for Comprehensive Schools, or some simple system of reallocation at the age of thirteen or even later. Then again many Secondary Modern Schools finally secured the right for their pupils to sit for examinations, and many are securing excellent results from their brightest pupils in the General Certificate of Education and in examinations organized by the College of Preceptors, the Royal Society of Arts, and various others planned by Local Authorities. The character of the Modern Schools changed rapidly as they developed Grammar streams. In this short chapter it is impossible to attempt any description of the variety of schools, groupings of schools, and diverse courses which have sprung up in the last few years. Nor is it very safe to forecast what will ultimately appear. It does, however, seem certain that boys and girls who develop late will get additional opportunities to change schools or courses whether the local area chooses to have Comprehensive Schools or one of the varieties of Grammar-Technical-Modern groups. And within the secondary system there must develop a greater variety of courses. Some kind of Comprehensive system will become general, however many may be the buildings in an area. A once-for-all selection on the earlier 11 plus lines will totally disappear.



Within these large schools, or wide groupings of schools, much more will be possible for Vocational Education. The old-fashioned system of academic instruction with a period a week of woodwork or housecraft is entirely antiquated. Boys and girls must be given wide choices in occupations and various forms of engineering, building, technical drawing, wood and metal crafts, commercial work, and more specialized trade training should be developed. We have to accept too that soon every adult will need to be able to drive some motor vehicle and have some understanding of engines and the equipment of a modern home—radio, TV, washing-machines.

We must decide, too, in a world where most young wives go out to work, what are suitable studies for girls. Is some of our domestic training suitable chiefly for Victorian homes? Would courses in cookery, home planning, decorating be equally valuable for boys as for girls?

Country schools, especially where the modern school can be in a large village centre or outside a town, and which children from a large surrounding district can attend, have a unique opportunity. Already those which have been established have proved their excellence. With ample playing-fields, fine gardens and lawns, space for some animals, poultry, and bees, they hold opportunities not easily exaggerated. Without narrowly preparing boys and girls to be farm-workers, they should be able to give, not only a fine general education, but add a rural bias. It must be remembered that the modern agriculturist must have an extensive knowledge of a great range of subjects: he must understand engines, elementary electricity, book-keeping, and good marketing nearly as well as soils, chemical manures, and animals. He must know something of the results of modern research into all branches of agriculture—and in no industry have there been greater advances in the last few years. Thus, a good country school may be most liberal in its education when it is most vocational, and no pupil need feel that its teaching is useless, because its reading, arithmetic, chemistry, physics, biology, hygiene, geology, engineering, and crafts can so often be closely related to the everyday life around. How fine its social and cultural life may be is not the subject of this chapter. It is reasonable to hope that the rural school stressing vocational training for the most liberal and natural of vocations can become a centre of revived life in the country-side,



as well as serving as a nucleus of local cultural activities and further adult education. From being the most backward feature of the educational system, it has the chance to become the model for fine teaching and for living. It follows that the first practical step is the building and equipping of such centres, and for this the money must be found.

Thus, vocational training should take its proper place in the general education scheme of the country, and as the English system at its best has always been devoid of rigid standardization, it is to be hoped that in the future, though opportunities will be greater for all, individual freedom, initiative, and choice will also increase and receive official support. Boarding-schools and Public Schools, which will probably continue to flourish, may, in general, have to adapt themselves to changing conditions. It will be difficult for any one boarding-school to offer the same facilities as the grammar, technical, and modern school combined, though it may decide to specialize in one direction. However, in the past two decades Public Schools have made great changes and have frequently become far more like good secondary schools (the reverse process is also true), so it is reasonable to expect them to make even further changes in the future.

With education continuing up to and beyond the age of sixteen, vocational training will play a leading part in every school, and it will have a rejuvenating effect on all. To children, it will bring reality and purpose, abolishing for ever the feeling that schools are concerned with useless things, and out of touch with reality. To parents and adults it will place the school in a position of increased importance, linking the home with the classroom as a nursery for life. The various types of school will stand for the best craftsmanship and knowledge of their subjects in each neighbourhood, and the children's work be of increased interest to each home. The co-operation and interest of parents will be increased, and must be exploited to the full. From being a kind of remote backwater, English education can be a mainspring of increased life.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### *Education and Leisure*



THE WISDOM of the scribe cometh by opportunity of leisure.<sup>1</sup> The writer of Ecclesiasticus had no doubt that the ordinary workers of the world could not hope for wisdom or knowledge in order to take part in government or affairs of State; their time was too much occupied with the trivial round and the never-ending task. (Politics, music, art, literature, and knowledge belonged only to those whose fortunate lot gave them leisure for thought, meditation, and study. His judgement would be hotly challenged in modern democracies, though his point of view could be defended. (Leisure is, on the whole, a recent addition to the life of working men.) My own grandfather for a period of his life never saw his bedroom during the winter months: he rose early in the morning and returned late from work, and as lighting was poor and expensive, he went to bed and rose in the dark.

The present century has seen a vast change: most of us expect at least one, and probably two, days free from work each week; working hours have been so reduced that there is considerable free time each evening; and each year will offer at least a fortnight's paid holidays. Certainly some people in responsible positions work much more, while many workers earn extra money by putting in overtime, but a moment's thought brings home to us the enormous increase in leisure for ordinary people in recent years. And the whole trend is for shorter hours, longer holidays, and more free time in the future. (The leisure which once belonged only to the wealthy *élite* is available for all. But sadly enough its increase seems to have brought as many problems as pleasures, and a mark of modern civilization is the increase in boredom, disillusion, and restless frustration in society. It can be seen not only in the extreme cases of delinquency and mental breakdowns but also in a more widespread slackness of behaviour and lack of interest.

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiasticus 38<sup>24</sup>.

Just as our age has the enormous advantage of modern scientific inventions and discoveries and is in dire danger of completely destroying itself, so the gifts of freedom and leisure seem to have led to society seeking temporary amusements by gazing at parlour games on television, watching sports being played by others, lazily reading the cheaper picture-papers, filling in football-pool coupons, or following endlessly the gossip notes about the private lives of the Royal Family or film stars.

Modern poets have described this mood or disease in terms which ring all too true for many people. T. S. Eliot's *Prufrock* may be typical:

*I have known them all already, known them all—  
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,  
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons.*

And his *Wind* speaks the epitaph on the modern well-to-do society in 'the land of lobelias and tennis flannels':

*Here were decent godless people:  
Their only monument the asphalt road,  
And a thousand lost golf balls.<sup>2</sup>*

At the other end of the social scale, William Plomer sees the seedy inhabitants of the City going

*Past the sad but so-called Fun Fair  
Where a few immortal souls  
Occupy their leisure hours  
Shooting little balls at holes.<sup>3</sup>*

It may well be that its attitude to leisure is the best criterion of the health of a nation or any section of a community, for healthy and alert men or women of intelligence find that they never have time for all they would like to do or the books, plays, music they would like to enjoy, or to visit the places they would like to see. It is the sure sign of the uneducated and vacant mind that it finds nothing to do and has so little of interest even to discuss.

At the same time as we have increased opportunities for leisure, we find that the work of vast numbers of our fellows has become more repetitive and monotonous. More and more factories and works appear to run on the belt system by which

<sup>2</sup> Choruses from 'The Rock'.

<sup>3</sup> *A Ticket for the Reading Room.*



each worker has one small task to repeat efficiently and unendingly, or in which he has solely to watch over some complicated machine.) It is often claimed that the craftsman in the Middle Ages did all the work for his finished product and at the end proudly produced his pair of boots or wooden plough. In his work he found full satisfaction for his creative instinct and at the end he could show with pride the object he had created. His satisfaction in a job well done was the more real because all the processes had been carried out by his own hands and at the end he could place before others the finished product. How can the modern man interminably fitting a pin in a slot or packing half-pounds of biscuits have any of the old craftsman's joy? Yet our idealized picture may have been all too rosy. Probably we should be appalled by the fearsome rustic oaths of our early ancestors when given a wooden spade to dig a hard ten-acre field. And we see the best modern carpenters turning immediately for electric planes or drills when they approach the solid oak boards needed for their tasks. Machines and modern tools can add to the pleasure of creation by doing much of the soul-destroying repetitive and dull work, just as they can supply us with increased leisure.

A further danger of the increased mechanization of our work and possibly of increased repetitive actions is that the worker who endures them regularly tends increasingly to want dull and repetitive actions in his leisure also. His spare time takes on an almost endless dull routine also, so that even his holidays become unpleasant interludes which distract him. The people who spend their leisure-times most interestingly tend to be those whose work is both interesting and satisfying. There seems little we can do about that, except to give people good leisure interests while they are still young and while they are at school where life can be varied and interesting. There may then later be a carry-over of activities and interests.

Let us then examine the ways in which leisure can be spent in adult life. For this I am taking five suggestions made by Dr Macalister Brew in *Informal Education*.

Firstly, she suggests, we can spend time in mere idleness, and she would observe that the present writer as a mere teacher would be sure to add the patronizing adjective 'mere' to the noun. Teachers are inclined, she asserts, to object to anyone being inactive, dreamy, or disengaged in good works. 'Work



for the night is coming' is their motto and 'Get on with your job, for I am watching' their constant exhortation. Yet human beings like and need to be idle sometimes. It is good to lie in the sun and do nothing ('sometimes' the true teacher adds quickly). Fra Lippo Lippi in Browning's poem recalls the harsh life of his semi-starving boyhood with the regular and well-fed existence in his monastery with

*the good bellyful,  
The warm serge and the rope that goes all round  
And day-long blessed idleness beside!*

(Secondly, we spend leisure-time in seeking pleasure and excitement. Despite the slight pursing of the lips of the elderly and serious moralist there is a place in life for sheer enjoyment and entertainment. The young find it in different ever-changing ways and fashions, from motor-cycles, from rock-and-roll or its current equivalent, from films and TV-thrillers.)

(Thirdly, we can have definite hobbies and spare-time occupations in contrast to our daily work. The clerk chained to an office all day can play tennis, swim, or work in the garden in the evening. Those doing heavier manual work by day could, it is claimed, spend evenings with books and music. A sensible adult may well plan his life to get this direct change.)

Fourthly, we can work in our leisure for our own self-advancement and improvement. There are Evening Institutes in many areas, and courses arranged nearly everywhere by Local Education Authorities or such bodies as the Workers' Education Association. There are masses of Correspondence Classes available: 'You too can have a degree—or at least a school certificate.'

And finally, there are endless opportunities of social work and service for others. It would be impossible to list the amount done in this country in Political Parties, Local Government, Church Work, Guilds, Community Centres, Women's Institutes, Young Farmers' Clubs, and in help given to hospitals, cripples, the aged, and small children.

It may then appear that a man who lives a full and complete life spends some of his leisure-time in all those ways with naturally a bias towards one or more of them at different periods of his life. In the same way a really misspent life would stress one only of those ways of spending leisure and the man



would become a lazy sluggard, a pleasure-seeking maniac, a neurotic planner, a self-seeking go-getter, or a nosey busybody.

It is of more concern to examine how far a good school will remember those points in its curriculum and social life. (There will be few periods directly labelled 'Leisure Planning', but the whole of the school's life will have its good influence.) It may well seem that boys and girls are naturally lazy enough without our organizing inactivity, yet some educational institutions would be vastly improved if they slowed down their pace, set far less organized home-work, and sometimes threw on children the responsibility of filling up their own time or doing nothing. Some well-meaning educationists who spend time in bemoaning the misspent leisure of the masses and in training their pupils to give 'every moment something to keep in store' have never given their own pupils any ordinary spare time at all. Probably girls' schools are worse than boys' in this matter. When the school-leaving age is again raised it would be a good thing if every secondary school had its common room with comfortable chairs where boys and girls could sit and read or talk before or after school, in breaks and possibly in some other periods. There are precious few such opportunities in many homes.

Schools are surely much more enjoyable places than in past ages, but very many still tend to be grim and over-serious. There are teachers still who feel that there is something a shade indecent in laughter, and that to jest on educational matters is not in good taste. (The better schools are already harnessing children's desire for enjoyment and sheer fun in their dramatic societies, concert parties, opera groups, choirs, in dances, socials and the entertainment of parents or other schools. In sports, indoor games, old-time, ballroom, country and modern dancing, as well as in the more cheerful everyday running of the school and classroom, children can learn to live together in good humour and find amusement and entertainment in daily routine. This discovery might do more to cure many types of delinquency than the well-meant plans of multitudes of later social workers. Much juvenile crime, as well as unhappiness, springs from boys and girls who have found schools dull and boring, teachers uninteresting, and themselves unloved and apparently useless or out of place. They have become disgruntled and disappointed, with chips on their shoulders



and grievances against society. For many an increase in happy and healthy enjoyment is of more importance than most historical or mathematical knowledge. A school should be a very lively place. \

(The planning of hobbies and encouragement of wide interests is surely part of every good school's aim, and is achieved not only by the ever-increasing school societies but also by good teaching of ordinary subjects. Every subject should lead to the encouragement of the taste for reading, and most subjects offer at least a few people special interests which may last for life. History may lead to a lifelong interest in archaeology, in old churches, castles, museums, to the study of industries, the countryside, the mountains, the sea-coast, to other races and other peoples' modes of life. What is needed is inspiring and enthusiastic teaching in which the zest of discovery and adventure is present.

English teaching means primarily the encouragement of a love of literature, of poetry and drama, the discovery that the wealth of the ages is at hand in a good library. \ The mastery of the correct placing of the apostrophe 's' is trivial compared to the acquiring of enjoyment in literature, yet still some teachers feel a shade guilty if their class is not found writing grammatical exercises in every English period.

(Recent years have seen a vast improvement in the teaching of Music, \ once rather an ordeal in which masses of children were dragooned into singing tuneless extracts of tonic sol-fa, and in practising vocal exercises to improve the voice for songs which were never sung. Or if some songs were finally taught in great detail with much suffering they were few in number and confined to a mere handful in selection. I have witnessed many \ music lessons in schools in which no song was ever sung and no music played. Now most schools can produce classes singing a large variety of old and modern songs, and very many can boast of school choirs, school orchestras, violin classes, pipers' guilds, brass bands, jazz bands, harmonica and various other instrumental groups. \ It is a poor school which has no record-player, and a poor teacher who does not train his pupils to understand the various instruments of the orchestra to enjoy listening to music of various types. All this good work has an enormous carry-over value into later life, and no training for leisure is of more importance.



The teaching of music obviously links up with the school assembly. A good head teacher plans with great care so that all children and staff can understand but also take part with enthusiasm and enjoyment. There should be good singing; there may be a place occasionally for the school choir and school orchestra; members of staff and children should certainly give readings or take prayers at intervals; and while routine and simple ritual has its value there must be enough change to lend interest and curiosity to each occasion. Again, before or after the Assembly is a time for good music. Records can be repeated at intervals so that children recognize them and know their composers. Some schools have in their entrance halls each week a picture of 'This Week's Composer' with a few facts about him and his music. Many good schools also have a short hymn-practice each week in preparation for other days. There seems much to be said for having hymn-books with tunes available so that almost imperceptibly each child learns to read music. This can only come by constant practice. (All this is of immense value at the time and later in life. Some will continue to sing in choirs and in churches and many will learn to listen intelligently and appreciatively to music on the radio and television.)

(Other obvious methods of spending leisure is in the various creative hobbies which might be grouped under the general title of Arts and Crafts. The value of all forms of handwork and crafts in school is difficult to overestimate, and it has been well realized in schools for duller and more backward children.) In fact, for a time there was a heresy that certain apparently brainless children, who could do no other work, were excellent at crafts and carpentry, easily surpassing those who won scholarships for high intelligence. Any good teacher hardly needs the assurance of the psychologists that this is totally wrong, though he reminds himself that any definition of intelligence ought to cover ability to do things, and that as well as general intelligence there are certain specialized forms of it. (Some dull children are slightly better at manual things than they are at what may be termed 'literary subjects', but in practice the bright boy is better at both.) Unfortunately, all too often the bright boy rarely receives as much opportunity for work with his hands.) Are there not ever-present examinations to be taken?



(The future ought to see that all children receive plenty of instruction in manual crafts, and that, even when they are 'intelligent', they are not deprived of these periods in the grammar schools. (All schools must be properly equipped with well-lit rooms for wood- and metal-work and whatever crafts the school plans to teach, whether it is book-binding, boat-building, basketwork, pottery, sculpture, modelling, or work in metals or leather. There must be plenty of materials and fine tools, as well as instructors whose status and ability are equal to that of the rest of the staff. In this manner each child will receive the present satisfaction of creative work with his hands, training in the control of mind and muscle for the craft, and preparation either for his vocation or for leisure in later life.) Possibly, too, there has not been enough stress on the appreciative aspect of arts and crafts, and few pupils know anything about the work of the masters of the things they study. In museums, churches, and cathedrals, for example, are specimens of the superb work of past masters in stone, metal, wood, and jewels, which should be known to all young craftsmen within their reach. It should be the task of the teacher of the craft to see that they are pointed out, just as he attends to the obviously creative work of his pupils. (Only by knowledge of what has been achieved in the past, and by observation of the best work being done round about in the present, can really satisfactory and complete craftsmanship be achieved, and a start made for a lifelong interest. )

(A more balanced teaching of art has to be evolved in many schools. In the early part of the century little was usually done except to practise certain of the technical aspects of drawing, with the great stress on perspective. Wretched children spent all their art lessons copying models of cubes and cones, with the exciting prospect that before leaving these would become flowerpots (empty) and bricks set at awkward angles one on another. Later came the introduction of colour with pastel and paint, though the stress remained on little technical details, and the work was generally niggling in size and irritating to the child from the emphasis on detail. In the intervals between struggling with the exact lines of the veins in a single leaf, he drew on odd bits of paper whole countrysides with animals, engines, and men. As he grew older he ceased from this in the



growing veneration for perspective and 'accuracy'. During the last decade there has been great advance in what has been termed the 'New Art' and children have been encouraged to draw large pictures with bright colours, to show movement and life and colour with little attention to accepted standards of perspective and photographic accuracy.) Exhibitions of children's art show how fresh and living many of the products have been, and any observer in schools where it has been carried out knows of the pleasure and satisfaction received by the children. A sense of balance and design with older pupils became of more importance than exact reproduction of individual shapes. The layman, however, has often felt that the exponents of the method sometimes went to extremes in their raptures of the freedom of apparent daubs and in their scorn of 'accuracy'. Glorious abandon seems to need to be tempered by technique as the child grows older, as has often been pointedly observed by intelligent children themselves. (The two sides of the art have to be joined for complete satisfaction to be found throughout life.)

[Again, it should be stressed that satisfactory art teaching will include the appreciative side, and all pupils should receive some training in looking at pictures. This means that the school must be well supplied with good reproductions of the works of masters both on its walls and in books in its library.) Many already support an excellent scheme by which copies of famous masterpieces are supplied and changed at frequent intervals. The school's own pictures must also be chosen with care, and there should be an immediate destruction of most of those at present to be seen in the poorer schools. (An attempt must be made to give appreciation talks about the pictures in the school, for in few arts can so much be done in the way of training in interest and taste as in painting and drawing. Visits under guidance must also be paid to art galleries if they are near enough. With a balanced teaching of art, more variety will be achieved in the actual practice, and children will be encouraged to find the media which suit them best. (Possibly more time might be given to rapid sketching, not only because life offers so many more opportunities for this and because it is often of considerable practical value, but also on account of the growing interest in sketches and cartoons.) With sane and inspiring all-round teaching of art, the enthusiasm which small



children seem always to possess for drawing and colour work may be kept throughout the whole school life and carried into manhood. (In the last few years there has obviously been a great revival of interest in painting and in pottery amongst adults, and this undoubtedly springs from the more creative teaching there has been in schools. It is a growing interest and hobby of many adults and may well rapidly increase in the next decade just as an interest in music has gathered momentum in the last.)

In the attempt to create beauty in wood, stone, metal, paint, unfathomed depths of enjoyment can be experienced and a new appreciation of the world discovered.]

*If you get simple beauty and nought else  
You get about the best thing God invents.<sup>4</sup>*

(Satisfying hobbies and interests are discovered not only in the ordinary lessons of a school syllabus, such as that described here, but also in the school societies and organized out-of-school activities. No feature of school life has expanded so much as these in recent years. Not only will any good school have its out-door sports activities—football, cricket, athletics, and swimming for certain, and possibly hockey, cross-country running, and netball—as well as its indoor sports such as basketball, boxing, wrestling, and badminton, but it will have dramatic societies for various age groups, religious societies, film-clubs, dances, stamp and railway clubs, chess clubs, debating societies, and in some places a host of others.) Boys Brigades, Scout Troops, Brownies, and Girl Guides may have close connections to some schools. In attending some of these and still more in learning to share the responsibility of running and organizing their activities boys and girls acquire lifelong interests which can flourish when school walls are forgotten.]

(The fourth suggestion for spending leisure was work for self-improvement and advancement.) Obviously children at school are already engaged in this, and further work would only normally be desirable when they left. However, (much good can be done in the last years by connecting up leavers with Evening Institutes and seeing that all know of the actual facilities for further learning and advancement in the local area.) Once boys or girls have decided on the jobs they wish to

<sup>4</sup> 'Fra Lippo Lippi.'



do, it is only right that they should be shown the ways of advancement within their chosen profession, what further qualifications are needed or are possible to obtain, and how and where this can be done.

[Finally we have seen the intelligent men and women give some of their time to the service of others and do unpaid service for the good of the community. The place to start to learn that is in schools.] This has already been discussed in some detail in the chapter on Religious Education, so it may be enough to stress again here (the importance of our task in teaching boys and girls that it is a duty to work at times for the good of others without the incentive of a cash reward. It must be admitted that very many of the young are most willing to do this once their imagination is captured and their enthusiasm aroused.) A danger of the Welfare State has been that it seemed to remove some of the opportunities for social service, but a good school should be able to show the appalling physical and spiritual need of millions of our fellows and the great causes of healing, peace, and political life, which desperately need support.

[So it is seen that every aspect of adult leisure has its counterpart or genesis in school life, and it is largely true to say that the problems of leisure can really be solved in the schools. Again, it must be stressed that it will not be achieved by inserting extra topics on an already crowded time-table, but rather by the active approach to the teaching of every subject and by the encouragement of all types of school societies and clubs. It is not by lectures on spare-time activities that success will be achieved but by children enjoying them while young and learning to organize them themselves.]

It is fortunate that the deep make-up of man is on our side and that the (desire for creative activity is deep within each of us so that without some expression of it our spirits are warped and starved.) The Christian may see the fundamental importance of this desire from another angle; for the Bible picture of God begins with Him as a Creator. He creates man in His own image; thus, man, too, is essentially a creator and as he fails to create he is untrue to his nature. Thus, in all school activities, work, sport, entertainment, social life, as the appreciation of fine workmanship and good fellowship is fostered, the learner may say with Robert Bridges:

*I, too, will something make,  
And joy in the making,  
Although tomorrow it seem  
Like the words of an empty dream  
Remembered on waking.*

All our work does not end in dreams, and every teacher has the endless satisfaction of seeing some pupils developing the interests and increasing the talents they discovered at school. It is of the utmost importance; for Jerusalem is not evolved but built in England's green and pleasant land.



## CHAPTER NINE

### *Education and Sex*

IT IS PROBABLY true that today no responsible person questions the statement that all young people are entitled to guidance and information about sex, and any controversy concerns what shall be taught and who ought to do it. Yet for centuries very little has been said about sex-education and even twenty years ago when *Living Education* had one chapter included on the subject a number of friends thought it ill-advised or rather daring.

Before this century most children left school by about the age of eleven, so adolescent changes and the first strong interests in sex occurred when the youths were working, but with the steady extension of the school-leaving age the whole process largely takes place while children are together in schools. Information once acquired in the small shops, during apprenticeships, on the farm, amongst adults, has now to be discovered while the children are constantly together in the intervals of going into a world where papers, books, cinemas, and general entertainments are dominated with sex. In the Forces when asked what ought to have more attention given to it in schools the third most frequent demand was for sex-education (it may be recalled that Vocational Training came first, and Current Affairs second—but only just second to sex-education).

Those who have attempted to give instruction on the subject invariably say how much it is appreciated and what relief accurate information gives to many boys and girls who are worried about their own emotional and physical disturbances as well as by the inaccurate stories and rumours passed on by other children.

That thoughts about sex occupy a great deal of attention of adolescents and almost dominate many lives is all too clear to an honest observer who tries to teach them. It is obvious that they are securing information rapidly and very probably in an undesirable manner. Inquiries among students in recent

years give a rough guide about the chief source of their own information, and in looking at these figures we should remember that the students come from good homes and good schools. Many other young people have far less desirable backgrounds.

The figures obtained were:

Information from other boys	32%
from books	25%
from school	17%
from parents	14%
from special lecture	5%
from stories told	4%
from lavatory walls	3%

The numbers are neither large enough nor was the sampling scientific enough to bear too close arguments on the findings. We do not know whether the books consulted were text-books or lurid and cheap novels. It may be noted that over half picked up their information themselves from friends or books, and even less obtained it from home than from school.

Information picked up from lavatory walls, dubious stories, the tales of other children, and desultory reading of novels is so obviously unsatisfactory that it needs no discussion. About fourteen per cent of boys receive some information from parents—probably more with girls, but I have no exact information. This fortunate few are getting instruction from what is generally accepted as the best source—the parents; but there is no information how much this means, how late it is given, or how satisfactory it is. Obviously a good home should be giving its children the knowledge they require about sex at the time they need it, and should be doing more by inculcating a healthy and natural attitude towards it. Many good parents, however, find it difficult, sometimes because of their lack of knowledge of many matters and even more for lack of proper vocabulary. In many poor homes the known terminology of sexual organs is generally considered indecent, and in presence of children no mention of them can ever be made. I personally think that there is an emotional barrier between many parents and their children which prevents much discussion of sexual matters. This is not because of lack of trust or love, but rather because of it. The parents can talk between themselves to other people and the children chatter with no embarrassment to other



children, but each party feels uncomfortable when talking with the other. (Something of the same sometimes happens about school discipline and belief in religion. A boy is more comfortable discussing it with people outside his own family.) Thus, I personally doubt the currently accepted statement that 'of course the proper place to hear about it is in the home'. I believe that the real answer is in the home and at school.

Twenty years ago when it was suggested to teachers that they should tackle sex-education there was usually a barrage of dubious arguments against it: the children here know more than you do already; the parents would object; it would embarrass the children; there was plenty of time to learn these things later on; there is too much advertisement about sex already; there is the fear of being labelled a crank by other teachers and being known as a 'sex enthusiast'. In fact let the parents do it, or call in a doctor or a parson. This last idea may be good in isolated cases but in general is quite impracticable when the whole school population is considered. Parsons and doctors have their time full already, and at any rate are often highly unsuitable people to talk to children at different ages. More and more in recent years the rationalization of the arguments already quoted has been abandoned and teachers have accepted their tasks. Inquiries made from men students coming to college show that some amount of sex-education is being given to one in every three, and this figure is slowly increasing. This is in grammar schools and the figure for other types of secondary school is probably much lower. The figure for girls' grammar schools is certainly higher. Again, it is difficult to discover exactly what is done generally: in some there are courses of instruction, but in others there is a single talk by the headmaster. The fact that sex-education is claimed to be given in a particular school may mean next to nothing.

Inquiries as to the manner of giving sex-education in schools show that nearly all sensible places include it in a general course of instruction so that it can be introduced as an integral part of a larger whole. More than half the schools include it under Biology or Science. It is fairly simple to teach about life, single-celled creatures, animals and human beings, their various organs and how they work. In fact it is next to impossible to teach biology and omit all references to sex. It is easy to extend the course to include useful teaching about sex,



though not absolutely necessary for the subject studied. The biological approach has one tremendous advantage: it gives a vocabulary which can be used freely by teacher and pupil about amoebae, fish, birds, frogs, and cats, and which can later be used without embarrassment when discussing human beings. The dangers are that the acquisition of scientific information may be considered enough, for sex with human beings is so much bound up with emotions, morality, aesthetic feelings, and religion. Then, not all children study any Biology. This problem is, however, overcome by a course in Health Education which can deal with how life begins and again, if it is felt necessary, introduce some Biology into it.

The second most common practice is for the headmaster himself to give the instruction. Some have a lesson or so when children first come to their secondary schools, others instruction as adolescence begins, and a further talk and discussion before the children leave. With a large school all this may become difficult to achieve.

In some schools the teaching is given by the Divinity specialist possibly because he or she is a suitable person. There is certainly much to be said for the teacher of religion to spend considerable time in the discussion both of sex and current problems of morals during children's last years at school, but it is more difficult to see why the earlier factual knowledge is particularly allied to Scripture teaching.

In a small number of schools the teacher of Physical Education deals with the matter, giving a few short talks each term to the various classes in the gymnasium. It is particularly effective at the onset of adolescence when he can observe the physical changes of boys in the shower baths and when changing, and explain events as they are happening. It may well be that gradually a mixture of these methods must be adopted unless, what would appear undesirable, a special person is appointed. It is surely highly desirable that sex should be accepted by children as a natural and healthy thing about which sensible teachers are informed and prepared to talk and answer questions.

If it is granted that some sex-education should be given in schools and recognized that it will be done in different ways and by different teachers in various schools, the question then comes to what should be taught at what ages. With young



children the simple answering of questions is probably enough. If it is done honestly the answers can be simple and factual. The small child is curious rather than seeking marriage guidance. What is most important is the general attitude of the teacher towards sex, and it is essential that the child should not pick up the idea that adults consider it a dirty or very embarrassing subject. Some homes will already have suggested this so that the sooner there is some counter action in school the better.

Older children in primary schools can be given the simple facts about reproduction and mating in either their Nature Study periods or in time devoted to Health Education. If pets are kept and discussed many other biological facts will be accepted as a matter of course. Because of the value of keeping pets and being with animals it is sometimes claimed that this can be sufficient and that country children have no problems. This is untrue. Many country children know little about nature and animals, and many others do not carry over their knowledge of animals mating to the habits of human beings.

In the secondary school the teaching can be thought of in three phases, the first of which is a kind of revision of previous knowledge, making sure that all children coming from different schools know the same facts. If the teaching is good and a sound vocabulary is established there should be plenty of questions. In some schools the lessons are given to classes as they remain mixed. The second phase takes place for children about the age of twelve or thirteen and directly concerns the facts about adolescence. There is much to be said for the classes to be of a single sex for this, for a girl may need more detailed information about menstruation than can sensibly be given with boys present. The other reason is that boys will ask far more questions about their physical changes when they are together. It is most important that direct facts should be given about the changes in the sex-organs, the growth of hair, about emissions and masturbation, because any discussions with young men will reveal the extreme worries of some of them at that period. Rumours and lurid stories from other boys or well-meaning adults have often raised secret fears that a boy is 'different', diseased, or not developing as others. It seems ridiculous that so many seek information from advertisements in men's papers, sending money to ascertain simple facts which

any sensible teacher could easily supply. If the instruction is given by teachers of Physical Education it may be most useful at this stage, when in changing rooms boys can see each other's different rates of development and be shown that it is natural and good for different people to develop at different rates. At the same time a boy's natural pride in his physical development and abilities may be encouraged.

Finally, some time before boys and girls leave school there should be possibilities to revise all factual knowledge and fill in any desired details. Sex must be shown them to be more than a mere physical urge, but something which is closely connected with self-control and the good of others. Only through free discussions can the young person be brought to see the importance of the family and the home, the right of every child to be born into a home, and the responsibility of parents to consider the future of the children they produce. It is the time for the religious view of marriage to be discussed and appreciated. It is useful if for some of these discussions at least the classes can be mixed, so that each sex can appreciate some of the feeling and problems of the other.

When such discussions do take place topics such as Contraception and Prostitution, which a teacher will probably have avoided because of strong views of some churches, will possibly arise. It is an opportunity for a teacher to put forward both his own and other points of view and to show how society can be divided about these matters, but it is much better for them to be examined in the atmosphere of the friendly school than in the more heated debates of the workshop, office, or factory.



## CHAPTER TEN

### *Education Out of Doors*

WHEN, ACCORDING to Bacon, God Almighty first planted a garden, He gave man the pleasure of living out of doors, and being granted sunshine and moderate warmth any reasonable being has a basic desire to be there still. Civilization, however, has increasingly driven its members inside—to the workshops, the factories, the office-blocks, the mines, the schools, the prisons. The pressures of commerce, the needs for money, employers, overseers, policemen, wardens, attendance officers, and teachers have seen that for long compulsory periods of life most of us are shut in. Yet the desire for movement, action, and out-of-door life is great: numbers of people manage to get work in the open-air even if it means having less money, and vast masses who work inside are waiting only to get home to gardens, bicycles, motors, and travel. Never have so many people wanted to move round the countryside, to picnic out, to visit other countries. Never have so many owned vehicles of some description.

It seems strange that, when so much of later life is spent in movement and in work and leisure in the open, for at least ten years in our youth and childhood we are condemned to training in enclosed classrooms and to work at desks or tables the like of which we shall never meet again. This century has, of course, seen great changes: schoolrooms have become more airy and pleasant places, new schools abound in glass, playgrounds and playing-fields have increased in size and amenities, games and physical exercises have become frequent events, and key-words of education have been such words as projects, activities, adventures, explorations. Desks and tables have been improved and made more suitable for children of different ages. (Children in some very modern primary schools seem to spend long periods trying to paint or write while squatting on the ground. Certainly such discomfort keeps them out of desks and enables telling photographs to be taken for educational papers!)

But a country boy of my father's time left school at the age of eleven, while the boy of today must endure another five years there.

It would be stupid to pour scorn on desks and classrooms and set lessons in schoolrooms, and equally foolish to advocate oral lessons out of doors. I have personally found far too many distractions when trying to teach there and too great a strain on the voice. The best place for any serious study is at a good table or desk in a well-lighted and orderly room—though for any creative writing I prefer a quiet place in the open air by myself. But with so much of later life spent in movement, in travel, and in work in the open, ought so much time of our ten years of compulsory education to be spent in classrooms?

Let us consider briefly how some subjects can adapt themselves to work both in and out of doors. Physical Education, to which some attention has already been given in Chapter Three, first springs to mind. The days of rows of children perhaps with coats removed standing in lines and turning heads or waving arms to numbers are nearly over. The subject must be thought of in relation to the neighbourhood of the school and local facilities as well as to the various ways of spending holidays, school journeys, and preparation for holiday activities later in life. Are there mountains and hills near? If so, there is walking, scrambling, climbing, and camping possible, and training and preparation will be necessary for these. Sea, rivers, canals, lakes may offer opportunities for sailing, canoeing, swimming, diving, under-water swimming, surf-riding. Bicycles, cars, and coaches bring most children within easy reach of the countryside nowadays. Increasingly, schools have good playing-fields for the major games and athletics, while many have swimming baths. The improvement in social conditions makes it possible for most children to have suitable sports clothing for different sports, track suits and sweaters, so that the activities can be adapted to the varieties of weather. Snow need not mean confinement to buildings, but opportunity for ski-ing, sledging; frost can mean skating. Thus, the physical activities of a school can be varied and exciting, offering opportunities for adventure, initiative, and endurance. The old routine boredom of Drill can be forgotten.

Geography and History next come to mind. Outside activities will again be closely related to the neighbourhood of the school,



but most—probably all—areas offer some facilities. Children will learn about maps as they travel about and find directions, about rocks and soils in the countryside or parks or gardens, about docks, railways, industries when possible in the areas where these are found. Much of the old-fashioned academic geography was of no value to children and of little interest to most adults, but the modern geographer is becoming an explorer, an investigator, an observer, a traveller. It is a subject concerned with the world in which we live and the lives of the people in it. Thus the best place to study it is in it—by travel, learning to observe, to notice, to investigate. Field work is essential.

History too is concerned with events that have taken place in particular areas. Local history is always possible, and the wise teacher will make full use of any local castles, old houses, ancient encampments, churches, battle-fields, Roman remains and roads, as well as collections in local museums. These places can be visited, notes and sketches made, photos taken: later back in classrooms the material can be collated and the work carefully written up. Thus, children can begin to learn how to combine practical and theoretical studies and cease to feel that History and Geography are merely the material found in a class text-book.

For many boys and girls Mathematics needs to be far more practical. Again, depending on the environment of the school, a wise teacher can weigh and measure quantities of objects both in and outside buildings. I personally remember a village teacher forty years ago taking me with other boys to measure various fields and allotments, weigh various sacks and pots of fruits and vegetables, measure the contents of hay ricks and estimate the weight. In rural Warwickshire this was sensible and had point; in a city it would have been unrealistic. Again, much geometry and trigonometry can be done in the playgrounds and playing-fields. When the practical work has been done and notes made, then the pupils see point in working the answers out in the classroom and learning the theory behind the information they are acquiring. Rural schools are probably most fortunate when they have gardens and when animals are kept. Then there is essential arithmetic to be done, feeding-stuffs and artificial manures to be weighed, measured, and distributed; accounts of spending and costs must be kept;



daily quantities of eggs, milk, and produce recorded; letters and orders must be written; careful records made of daily events, plantings, reapings, matings. The practical arithmetic of everyday events can naturally be linked with the careful mathematics of the classroom, and both are seen to have their value. The same system can obviously be applied in schools in other areas though the subjects of investigation will vary by the sea, in the docks, near the mines, or the centres of great industries.

Though much Science must obviously be done in laboratories and classrooms, there is again much which can be done by experiment out of doors by large scale weighing, balancing, testing. Much can be done with even a bicycle and far more with an old car, motor-bike, or engine. In rural areas again teachers are fortunate, because today science of every kind is so allied with agriculture and horticulture, that the future farmer will be lost without some knowledge of chemistry.

Great artists and sculptors in the past have done some of their work in the open air and have painted and modelled from nature. Children on the whole have been restricted to desks and classrooms. Much is now being done, and much more can be done, to move into the open, to paint and sketch from nature, to work on an easel, to model objects of considerable size. Children who hated the pencil drawings on small scraps of paper, and the making of finicky little models in plasticine can often find great pleasure when given quantities of paint and large spaces to cover, masses of clay and room to make a cheerful mess if necessary.

Natural History, nature study, botany, and biology must essentially have plenty of field work, but many schools still neglect the opportunities afforded by both countryside, seashore, and parks. Work can vary from the simple but often delightful nature rambles of the Infant Schools to the organized walks of seniors for direct discovery or observation of particular plants or creatures. Much more bird-watching, animal observation, and direct study of particular creatures is desirable. Possibly reptiles could be watched in the natural habitat, birds observed and photographed on their nests rather than the old-fashioned method of collecting slimy creatures for the green water of grimy jam-jars in school windows. Some escape may even be made from the fervid nature-lovers ever collecting



eggs, butterflies, or other small creatures, armed with their jars of poison, pins, and dissecting knives: the hunting spirit satirized by Walter de la Mare.

*Have you trod like a murderer through the green woods,  
Through the dewy deep dingles and glooms,  
While every small creature screamed shrill to Dame Nature,  
'He comes—and he comes!'*?<sup>1</sup>

It would seem to me that courses in Natural History fail if they do not give their pupils a respect for life even if creatures are small, and a love of countryside which will result in genuine anger at uprooted bluebells and blossoms ripped from hedges, and the desecration of roadsides and hedgerows by litter and broken glass. The way to learn this is by growing up in schools which train children to use and enjoy the country properly.

Nature walks and travel in the countryside naturally link up with other school visits; for all these supply opportunities to train children in sensible and courteous behaviour in society, in respect for fields, crops, fences, and gates of farmers, and in road sense. Most schools are increasingly having whole-day and half-day visits to places of interest, to historic centres, to picture galleries and museums, to churches and cathedrals, to centres of local government, to law courts, to docks, factories, farms, and a host of other outside aspects of contemporary life. Flower shows, agricultural shows, pageants, special church services, theatres, and films may also be occasional valuable breaks from ordinary routine and help to bring school life into closer relationship with the world of adults.

The importance of seeing the world and the educational advantages of travel have been recognized in most ages. 'Travel in the younger sort is part of education', said Bacon. In the past, however, it has been largely restricted to young men and to those with plenty of money, and it is only our own times that have seen the recognition of its value for boys and girls. The School Journey movement, now one of the most flourishing sides of any live school's existence, has grown up this century (though its origin must spring from all who have enjoyed and advocated travel in past ages). It is sometimes said to owe its existence to Joseph Cowham the Master of Method at Westminster College at the end of the last century. He took

<sup>1</sup> 'Tit for Tat'.



parties of students on trips to places near London to observe geographical and geological features in particular, and then inspired his pupils to do the same thing in their schools later on. At first their efforts met with fears and criticism from most people in authority, but gradually more and more schools began to make experiments with groups of boys and girls making longer visits to different areas. In 1900 Joseph Cowham together with two of his former pupils, G. G. Lewis and Thomas Crashaw, published a small book giving an account of journeys they had made. It was entitled *The School Journey. A Means of Teaching Geography, Physiography and Elementary Science*. It was dedicated 'to 1,500 teachers—students of Westminster Training College 1877-99—who have accompanied the author on the first of these school journeys'. Then Local Education Authorities gave their support, offered financial aid, and allowed teachers to take parties away in school time. Children now visit all parts of the British Isles, the countryside, the mountains, industrial areas, the cities, the seaside, and travel by foot, rail, coach, canal barges, and liners. Parties visit all parts of Europe at all times of the year. To many children the School Journey is the highlight of the whole of their education, an experience which they remember for life. It can supply the thrill of exciting new experiences:

'Youth is the time to go flashing from one end of the world to another both in mind and body—to try the manners of different nations; to hear the chimes of midnight; to see sunrise in town and country.'<sup>1</sup>

The School Journey Association of London defines the aims of a journey rather more precisely. The chief aims are:

- a. To attempt to educate in the child a love of country in all that the city, town or countryside can offer, whether ancient or modern, and to stimulate the mental, spiritual and physical development of the child.
- b. To learn how to spend a planned holiday intelligently and happily
- c. To acquire resourcefulness, initiative and self-reliance, and to cultivate good fellowship and unselfishness.<sup>2</sup>

During a well-conducted journey the children will probably

<sup>1</sup> R. L. Stevenson, *Virginibus Puerisque*.

<sup>2</sup> *How to Promote a School Journey*, School Journey Association.



use all the methods previously described in this chapter though the environment will naturally bias the activities in particular directions. So too will the bias of interests and abilities of the staff who conduct the journey. For months before the journey the children will have been making preparations, learning to use guide books, maps, directories. After the journey the results can be summarized, accounts written for school magazines or wall newspapers, photos mounted and displayed. Most schools also encourage the compilation of personal guide-books which can be completed with sketches, photos, and a diary by each participant before it becomes his personal possession. I have known some Old Boys of a school to have their ancient guide-books when they took their own families back to the old scenes years later on.

The School Journey allows pupils and staffs to see each other in quite different and often in a more adult light. Even today it is in its infancy as an educational method: it is certainly one that will grow beyond present imagination in the future.

It would be possible to continue to describe the possibilities of education outside school buildings—the use of books, novels, plays, poetry linked with the countryside, different regions of the British Isles, with agriculture, animals, birds, and fish; but enough has been said to indicate the importance of the approach and something of the opportunities for the future. The day is gone when education can be regarded as a process of confinement between four walls or of instruction given in desks within a classroom. It must also emerge into the activities of the outside world and enjoy the life and liveliness of the sunlight and the open air.

*you are in my heart*

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### *Education and Discipline*

**H**AST THOU children? Correct them, and bow down their neck from their youth. . . . He that loveth his son will continue to lay stripes upon him. . . . Give him no liberty in his youth, and wink not at his follies. Bow down his neck in his youth, and beat him on the sides while he is still a child. . . . For if you beat him with the rod, he shall not die.<sup>1</sup>

The somewhat embittered writers of Ecclesiasticus and Proverbs, who may well have been retired teachers, had no doubts about the meaning of the word *discipline* in ancient times, and were equally certain about the means of achieving it.

Twenty years ago when writing the first *Living Education* I spent more time on this chapter about Discipline than on any other, and tried to state not only my personal opinions, but what was then considered the balanced views of enlightened educationists at the time. There was, I now feel, considerable truth in that statement but also many basic weaknesses. The original argument was something like this:

A school may be run on one of two systems of conduct which for convenience we may call Order or Discipline. 'Order' is what our less enlightened ancestors maintained and probably felt to be satisfactory; 'Discipline' was the desirable state of our own pupils eternally exercising their self-control while joining with us in desirable educational activities.)

Order—a slightly disreputable word—is 'what the teacher keeps', the quiet state of a classroom so that work can be done efficiently, and life lived in reasonable peace. The good disciplinarian of the past maintained this desirable state by the force of his personality, the natural gift which God had allotted to good domines, by the offer of rewards, by the threats of punishment, by the strength of his arm. The teachers who lived longest and had the least strain became rather like civilian sergeant-majors whose bark was probably worse than their bite.

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiasticus 7<sup>23</sup>; 20<sup>1</sup>, 11-12; Proverbs 23<sup>13</sup>.



(‘When I got to the Sixth Form I discovered he was quite human!’) Nevertheless this order was an enforced state, and when the influence of the teacher was withdrawn, chaos and disorder reigned. We saw the classroom with its rows of silent children all scratching away with their pens while the teacher sat in front and kept a roving eye over the class, raising an effective eyebrow when any pupil began to stare vacantly around. Then, as the teacher went from the room the class ceased from work, free fights began, ink pellets flew, and hell was let loose. That unfortunately was the final result of our Order.

How different was the school where Discipline was the keynote! The true and real example was laid up in a Platonic heaven but most of us could describe the earthly approximations to it. The class was never quite silent; the children were never afraid of their teacher; with smiles and naturalness they consulted him (and even more ‘her’) whenever needed; in friendly co-operation they worked in groups and shared their activities—often around large sheets of paper or models on the floor. They had been fired with enthusiasm for some project or for the whole process of education and in that general interest hardly noticed if the teacher was present or not. One suspected that he was often better absent. The teacher-pupil relationship was that of a good home and the school a larger extension of the well-run household. The word ‘Discipline’ was obviously related to ‘Disciple’, and the pupils were disciples of a master in school. To achieve certain results, to learn certain things, to follow some leader, the pupil became a willing disciple, exercising self-restraint in many matters, enduring occasional restrictions with good humour, and working hard to overcome difficulties so that the great end might be achieved.

We may suppose that Stanley Matthews arrives to coach keen boys in Soccer, or some fine craftsman takes charge of our model-making Society. There will be no need for a disciplinarian to keep order. All pupils passionately desire to learn and are prepared to make sacrifices to achieve the results they want. Discipline then comes to mean the general conduct and standards of behaviour gradually acquired by effort and continual practice and experiment, the code of honour and personal behaviour which the pupil comes to hold and which he will carry over into later life. Many people feel that at least at times they have experienced something of this kind in



their own schools or with a particular class. Perhaps their own natural weakness or the more backward conduct of some of their colleagues causes the slight failures in the scheme or the full realization of Utopia. However, we can but try and keep the ideal ever before us.

That putting of the case, though possibly not quite fair, largely expresses the views and hopes of many idealistic teachers. But there are a number of fallacies in it. Firstly, a school is not a family but a much larger community, and the kind of behaviour which may be natural and sensible for one or two children in a room is quite overwhelming when there are thirty boys or girls together. It has also to be remembered that our picture of the family group is often idealized in educational works. Many of the families so well known to many of us can only be tolerated for any lengthy period by the harassed parents. Small children in the home are frequently bored and querulous, constantly being nagged by parents into some kind of sullen submission, and constantly demanding what they can do next; older children get out of the house or home as often as they can. Prayers of thankfulness bombard heaven when school holidays end. The teacher who is so often exhorted to think of his teaching in relation to the good parent in the good home needs also to add 'for some periods of the time only'.

Then, there are fallacies in the comparison with the adult Master and his Disciples. At the back of the speaker's mind as he uses such phrases is the picture of Christ and His Apostles, but it must be immediately remembered that He was dealing with adults and not children. There is no evidence of Christ's views on teaching children except that He placed a child in the midst in order to teach a particular lesson to a group of adults on one occasion. His reference to ill-tempered or unco-operative children at play is too realistic to be quoted in most books on education:

Children sitting in the market place which call unto their fellows and say, We piped unto you and ye did not dance; we wailed and ye did not mourn.

Christ seems to have made no criticism of His own teachers or His own schooling.

Although the Master and Disciple idea may be useful at



times it has two basic weaknesses. The phrase suggests a Disciple willing to sacrifice everything to learn from a Master, and it pictures a Master always worthy of imitation. We who teach know all too often that our knowledge and technique are often scanty and that we are indicating methods rather than always demonstrating them. None of us can honestly say, 'Follow Me'. Again, the illustration of Stanley Matthews coaching boys at Soccer is only useful while he sticks to Soccer. His willing Disciples will be less devout when he begins to coach arithmetic, grammar, spelling, and French irregular verbs. Even if the critic raises the suitability of some of those subjects for younger children, he will surely have to agree that every child cannot be kept keenly interested or thrilled by every subject every day. A number of over-publicized schools, particularly in the twenties and thirties of this century, experimented with what was called complete freedom in schools. Some were successful—this was particularly stressed by those who organized them—and undoubtedly they had a great influence on educational writers and those in charge of educational organization and planning. Some children become nervous and neurotic, many others come to hate schools and teaching, because of early repressive methods of instructions and teachers or parents who are feared or disliked. This truth led to the assumption that all children were 'repressed' by conventional schools and all needed their 'freedom'. Some schools gave their pupils free choice of subjects to study and allowed them to start or stop at choice. Their later lack of factual knowledge was more than balanced by their freedom from inhibitions and their spontaneity of expression. Adult control was almost eliminated and the discipline of the institution was maintained by school councils or frequent school parliaments. The headmaster was often given a vote in this. The results were sometimes better than a cynic might expect. Some children eventually became so bored by spontaneous games of Red Indians and Cowboys that they desired to do arithmetic as a welcome relief. The organizers of the school of course allowed all children to smoke and swear at will, believing that it would soon cause physical or mental sickness. Outside observers saw little signs of this sickness as they listened to the hard-swearing young smokers. Dangers which arose were that children are often much harsher in their penalties than sensible adults would be, and that in reality



much order was obtained by small gangs of boys who dealt with any younger offenders in ways unknown to idealistic headmasters.


Obviously some of these experimental schools were much better than others and there was outstanding success with some formerly difficult pupils. The influence of such experiments was of much greater importance. Its good side was the stress on love as our main concern in dealing with children, and on the encouragement of children's natural interests at each age rather than on preparation for a distant future. Unfortunately those who ran some of these schools wrote persuasively and enthusiastically of their own methods of love and understanding, but at the same time accused all other schools and teachers of harshness, restrictive practices, sadism, and of course 'repression'.

It would appear to me that there is a fundamental weakness in the 'freedom schools': it is that the children are being treated prematurely as adults. Adults among English-speaking people favour a democratic way of life with votes-for-all, parliaments, councils, and endless committees. So, it is claimed, children also need these. Nothing is often farther from the truth. The young child is thankful when the adult who has more experience and more ideas can suggest some activities and show exactly how they can be carried out or what are the rules of the game. Then he can get on with the job and enjoy himself. My own personal experiments with boys in running a kind of class committee on discipline gradually petered out. Many were restless, uninterested, and bored by the procedure after the first initial interest. I stopped when one boy interrupted my posing of some new minor problem with, 'Oh, make up your mind, Sir, and say what you want! You're paid for it!' The real desire was for an ordered community in which we could get on with our activities and sports. Why have an everlasting discussion on the rules of the game and their possible amendments?

We have grossly underestimated the deep-rooted desire of children for stability, security, and order. Only with this assured can they experiment or adventure. They will break rules sometimes, but it is essential that the rules be there for any mental health. This view has been recently strengthened by the experience of two friends with small children who were



sent to very pleasant schools running on very free lines. The teachers were pleasant and efficient, there was no restrictive discipline, and the children were given almost unlimited choice of activities. The particular boys were most unhappy, disliked school, and failed to sleep at nights. After trying various treatments the parents took them away and sent them to other schools—schools apparently not so modern or efficient. Order was firmly maintained and the children had rather formal work to do. The boys were completely happy and sleep returned at night. They were no longer trying to cope with a world containing too many choices and problems, matters were clearly right or wrong, and there was a mass of work to be done. The other schools had apparently given too much choice to too immature minds. This argument must not be extended too far; for certainly children must be trained to make choices and control their own conduct, but adult theorists can hasten too fast. Again it is quite astonishing to see how happy are the boys in some Naval Schools and some denominational boarding schools where order is rigidly maintained. On visits I have decided that many of their methods appear wrong and out-dated, but the boys appear far happier than in the less controlled, freer disciplined places. It is, of course, possible that happiness is not the final test and that we ought to make children face up to the problem of endless free choices early in life.

 There is, naturally, room for a great variety of interpretations of the word 'Discipline' in schools, depending on the tradition of the place, the age of its pupils, their sex and abilities the area and the kind of homes from which they come. But some discipline and order is essential for three groups: the children, the teachers, the whole school. It is essential for the children in order that they may not grow into young barbarians with purely selfish considerations. They must learn that in a community certain standards of morality and order must be preserved, and some personal inclinations sacrificed for the general good of all.)

/ A point frequently overlooked in discussions of this subject is that some discipline is needed to make the life of a teacher endurable. There may be a few brave experimental souls who are prepared to spend their lives in the midst of rowdy bear-gardens where children riot as they wish and are as insolent



as young thugs, but the ordinary teacher is surely entitled to reasonable behaviour around him, sufficient order and attention so that he can teach his subjects and explain difficulties in peace. He should not expect to be the lion-tamer in a cage or a drill instructor dealing with recalcitrant recruits. Unfortunately there have been many places where teachers have had to attempt that task, and some have broken down under the strain while others developed eternally nagging or bullying manners. (Those who survived, the 'good disciplinarians', were not always the most desirable influences on children. More artistic, sensitive, and kindly people abandoned the struggle in schools which had abandoned the idea of order and respect.)

Finally, good order is essential in each class so that the whole school has an atmosphere of work, politeness, and respect. Conversely the school should have such standards of sensible conduct that classes will be civilized places where teachers can expect to work without strain and in which they can stay good tempered. They should be places where jokes can come easily. Many schools have this inestimable advantage, and a young teacher can start work there with confidence and enjoyment. In others where the school has no accepted standards he may have to fight for his life during his first years of teaching. It is surely the duty of the Headmaster in particular and older members of staff to see that their school is an orderly and well-conducted community and that no minority of children can ruin it. (Good discipline in a school is essential not only for the sake of the children but equally for the sake of the Staff.)

If the argument is right that children like and appreciate order in schools it may well be asked why there is bad behaviour and hooliganism so frequently. It is worth considering the various possible causes of this.

Firstly, we can consider the causes of poor behaviour which are due to environment. Everyone admits that it is much more difficult to teach in an overcrowded and poverty-stricken area than in a district where the children come from good homes; for the latter have already a background of life under sensible treatment and where orderly conduct is the rule. To put it in a crude form—children from good homes (social class and money need not come into this) do not swear or throw ink-wells at a teacher if he does not fit in with their desires. These acts are not unknown in very poor areas. It follows, too, that children



who are properly fed, given regular meals and adequate sleep in healthy rooms will tend to be fresher and more contented than those who are neglected, poorly fed, and who can only get to bed when their fathers and mothers return from the public-houses after closing time. From considerable experience in a very poor district, I know that awkward, ill-tempered, slovenly, and even vicious conduct can often be explained by the happenings in the boys' homes on the previous night. I knew years ago of scores of children who very seldom went to bed—and sometimes to a bed on the floor or even under sinks—till after eleven at night. On Saturday and Sunday evenings there were crowds of children waiting round the public-houses on each corner, whatever the weather, till closing time. No discussion about discipline which ignores those facts is of any value. Mercifully, however, such children form a small minority, but they serve to remind all educational theorists about the importance of environment.

This cause of poor discipline is one which can ultimately be overcome, and we may hope that further education will hasten the victory over poverty and indifference; but if necessary, the community of the future must face up to more control or State supervision of houses and home life to achieve reasonable minimum standards. Conditions which prevent a child from securing proper food, air, sunlight, and clothing cannot be tolerated, and the cost of interference with the parents' right to ill-treat their children must be paid, even if it involves a loss of certain individual liberties. Discipline in many areas is only a part of the problem of housing, health, education, temperance, and general social reform.

The second cause to be considered is that of the school buildings and accommodation; for dark, ill-ventilated classrooms, with shabby walls and mean windows, breed the kind of conduct all too often found in them. There can be little pride in the school, or feeling that the material it holds must be respected when the place is in fact a slum. Many such places still exist, and others which are not black-listed are mean work-house-looking structures rising up in all their ugliness as the kind of child prisons for which in the past school attendance officers were considered an essential part. Poor buildings, too, make the weather a very important factor in maintaining good discipline; for inadequate heating and ill-fitting doors and



windows make it difficult even for the most saintly teacher to feel human in winter, just as small windows and lack of proper ventilation make the summer heat almost unendurable.

That factor, again, is one that is being overcome, and it is pleasant to see how many fine new schools, with proper facilities and playing-fields, have sprung up over the country in recent years. It is reasonable to suppose that new schools will continue to increase, and as this happens, a certain amount of disciplinary trouble will disappear.

The fact remains that those causes are external ones, and that in some fine new buildings in good areas and even in fine weather there are classes like bear-gardens and unhappy children and teachers. Thus, we may next examine the faults of teachers as a cause of bad discipline. In discussions with young men in the Forces and with students later it is this cause more than any other which is stressed; for most remember some sour, disgruntled individuals in whose presence no child could wish to be. Many tell of 'weak' teachers with whom the best-conducted class soon became a set of little hooligans; others describe occasional sadistic scenes which, though exceptional, can only be termed disgraceful. There can be no true discipline where the teacher is heartily disliked, although there may be a façade of good order. Every small boy has, apparently, a hatred of favouritism (I fancy that we grow out of this as we grow older and know more about the ways of the world) and, unfortunately, he is not always a good judge of it in point of fact. On the whole, it would seem that boys have much more horror of being shut up with a dull and humourless man than with one who may occasionally lose his temper or even be violent; they can forgive cruelty sometimes, but the dull lifelessness of the disgruntled pedant is the final terror.

Bad discipline which results in direct disobedience and disorder is sometimes an unconscious revolt against a disliked teacher; for example, a boy may be found to behave badly in geography lessons. Investigation shows that he greatly disliked an earlier teacher of this subject and transferred his dislike of the person to his subject. Later on he retained his hatred of geography and continued his habits of inattention and disobedience in those periods.)

Among the hundreds of men I have questioned, I have found next to none who recalled any naturally sadistic teacher—a



fact which caused me some surprise. Many, however, are accused of a lack of ordinary patience, and of bad lapses of temper. With those, some boys found it impossible to learn. 'You know that you are going to do things wrong with them, so nothing seems to matter', explained one airman, and another stated: 'Discipline often depended on the health of the headmaster and on what he was doing the night before'

The elderly and the disgruntled are often blamed, but by far the greatest number of teachers fail, not through age or loss of temper, but from dullness and lack of ability to teach. 'There are still a great many teachers who have the unhappy gift of making any subject they teach dull', said one answer. This 'gift' may come from their lack of general interests and humour, but it may also be the result of poor preparation and scanty training. Many boys from grammar schools, in particular, complain, not of the lack of knowledge of their former teachers, but of their inability to put things over. Bad order is only one of the consequences.

It may be asked how far it is possible to remedy all those failings. Some of them can certainly be overcome; for in the future we may hope that only those who have received a proper training will be allowed to teach, and that the training colleges will have better facilities than in the past, so that a higher standard of teaching can be demanded. Better payment of teachers in all grades of schools, and a better distribution of payment between the different grades of schools will do much towards alleviating grievances and eliminating the disgruntled teacher. It would also be a good thing if there were better opportunities for those who grow weary, or find that they are misplaced, to leave the profession. Improved teaching facilities will also help to abolish some of that dullness which so easily besets us. The fact remains, however, that there can never be a perfection standard reached by all teachers, and that different men will always vary in their abilities. Health factors and home conditions will always have some influence on a man's mood and temper, so that all that can be done is to secure the best type of men and give them the finest training for their work.

Another factor of discipline is that of a sensible curriculum. The feeling that time is being wasted on useless subjects, as is shown elsewhere in this book, is the cause of much bad work, inattention, and poor behaviour. Time-tables are sometimes



badly arranged, with too long periods devoted to one subject, and with too little movement, physical training and games. This is particularly true for younger children who require even more movement and practical work than those who are older. All teachers are continuously tempted of the devil to lecture rather than to allow their pupils to work and learn. Better training, more adequate staffing, and greater attention to the exceedingly complicated business of arranging time-tables will do much towards overcoming that cause of evil.

( The final and most important aspect of discipline is concerned with the children themselves. It is the child who works, wastes time, is active and happy, or is unruly and discontented, although all the other factors previously considered are inextricably mixed up with the reasons for his behaviour. Given all the improvements which have been suggested, a larger part of the difficulties of education will have disappeared, but a portion will still remain. A number of individuals gathered together cannot be expected always to want to study the same subjects, and although the use of individual methods of instruction can help a great deal, there must be times when everyone has to sink his personal preferences for the common good, and to take interest in things for which he has no particular desire. It is surely part of the training for life to learn to do that, and to discover an interest in matters which we had previously believed to be dull; for it is no job of education always to offer soothing syrups of pleasing flavour and to cajole children occasionally to sip them.

Much more physical activity for boys and girls could help a great deal, just as a carefully planned time-table giving variety of work can help to hold enthusiasm and interest. Most of us at times can admit to feeling lazy and to needing some spur to prick the sides of our ambition. A feeling of 'worthwhileness' has to be supplied from somewhere. It was the lack of this feeling in the later years of children at secondary modern schools which so frequently made them difficult to teach. The increased modern stress on incentives both long-term and short, the use of examinations, of the linking of subjects with vocational training or leisure-time interests, the use of house-systems and competition are doing much to supply these incentives to work and sensible behaviour.

Having watched students in training for teachers, I have



frequently spent long periods in a desk at the back of a class watching young men trying to teach. While admitting that it was probably more tiring for me than for the children to whom the material was fresh, I know that I have frequently been attacked by sore temptations to disorder during the later afternoon. On occasions, in fact, I have given a mild kick to the boy sitting in front of me for the pleasure of seeing him jump, and with the secure knowledge that he will never think me guilty of such base conduct. I rejoice to say that increased age has not spoiled my cunning, and that I have never yet been spotted. (I am proud to have resisted the temptation to use a pin—up to date.) Such conduct is indefensible, but it has proved again to me that boys themselves must occasionally feel irresponsible, and commit acts of disorder for which there is no serious explanation. Nearly all healthy boys at times are full of exuberant energy and excitement, to which, for example, it is difficult to harness an arithmetic lesson. There is in most of us a latent dare-devil spirit which is prepared to commit foolish acts and to put up with the consequences, and for most boys and young men occasional disorder, riot, or even a rough house, is most pleasurable. This statement does not imply that those feelings should be encouraged and that the energy should not be sublimated into more orthodox channels, but it does call for the honest admission that such feelings are there. Boys and men have to learn that it is usually better to control such desires and activities.

Where there is any community of young people there will be on occasions group escapades, rags, and disorders. These cannot be encouraged because if they occur frequently orderly life becomes impossible. The culprits may well have to pay certain penalties, but older people are foolish to take such outbursts over-seriously. A more difficult problem is created not by a temporary desire for disorder or ragging of a whole group, but by the existence of a small number who apparently have no wish to work, listen, or even share in games. As teachers we may well blame ourselves and our school system for such groups having been formed, but we certainly have also to do something about their present state and ensure that their conduct does not interfere with the good of others.

So much for a consideration of the causes of disorder and trouble in schools: the matter of corrective treatment, penalties,

and punishment can be discussed in the next chapter. It is excluded from here because discipline and good order are so much more than the suppression of the bad and of punishment of offenders. If the discipline of the school is good the succeeding chapter may be of little importance. It remains to stress once more that good discipline is essential for the school and the teacher, and is highly desirable for the child. The phrase 'the child' is in itself dangerous: it means John aged six or Mary aged fifteen. In practice what is good discipline for John is ridiculous for Mary, and the task of the school is to see the slow development of the term and the evolution of maintained good order into self-discipline and easy co-operation.

If the schools of the future are based on the best examples of the past, they will become communities with common aims and interests where teachers and pupils are friends co-operating not only in work and sport but also in government. This government will also be based on respect for teachers as older and more experienced people with something to be offered to the pupil. It will be achieved in an atmosphere of order and security, an order which is not solely imposed from above but is supported by the good will and co-operation of all. Yet all will know that it is a community whose young people are learning to live and to experiment with life and in which they will make and remedy their mistakes. Good order will spring from the virtues it also helps to create—tradition, good manners, consistent work, courtesy, a spirit of adventure, sheer enjoyment of life.



## CHAPTER TWELVE

### *Education and Penalties*

IT HAS BEEN agreed that good order is essential in schools so that teachers can teach and children learn in comfort freed from the strain of irresponsibility and unnecessary noise and disturbance. In this atmosphere good discipline may be acquired and children and teachers lead happy and secure lives and develop interests with good humour. The school can be a place of quiet speech and plenty of laughter. This can only be secured when the headmaster, staff, and children know what they want and consistently strive to attain it. When a school achieves this pleasant and natural state of affairs, then any conduct breaking it will be felt to be wrong.

Only a stupid person would expect there to be no breaks in that calm industrious manner of life, because schools are places where boys and girls are learning to grow up, learning to fit in with one another, learning to share, to lead and to obey, learning that the breaking of rules leads to penalties and that when these are paid they start again to discover right activities and right modes of conduct. In one sense the right place to break rules and pay the penalty is in school where the consequences are not serious and lasting, rather than in the world where consequences are often all too serious and permanent. One of the things we have to learn in life is that we cannot always have our own way and behave in a certain manner regardless of the feelings of others, and that at times we must carry out orders. The earlier we learn this, the happier we are and the fewer problems we find.

We have seen that bad and foolish behaviour may be the result of home environment, school conditions, a bad timetable, unsuitable teaching, the interruptions of a rebellious group, or general slackness and noisiness of the school or class. Whatever be the reason, the teacher has to deal with the matter remembering that he has a duty to himself and to all members of the group. Everyone is entitled to learn and work in reasonable



peace, and the teacher's sole duty is not to the sinners only. It is quite surprising how much boys tend to despise those teachers who do not insist on good behaviour and order, and how frequently the most admired member of a staff seems to be strict in his discipline. Strictness is often appreciated if it is scrupulously fair. Boys and girls are quite childish in their suspicions of favouritism and unfairness in teachers—it is a little sad to find how easily we come later to endure it in adult life. In general if we find a boy upset by any punishment, it is not the amount or method of its infliction which troubles him, but that he thinks on this occasion it is unfair or unjust.

It must be remembered that children's attitude to penalties is not that of sensitive adults who tend at the present time to see punishment as having three aspects—reformation, retribution, and the prevention of other wrong-doers. The adult will probably argue that it should never be mere retribution, that often it is doubtful if it is a preventive, and its chief reason is reformation of the person who commits the wrong. A teacher when he does use punishment hopes for the betterment of the wrong-doer, but as well almost certainly trusts that it discourages others from acting in a similar manner. Boys naturally start from the other end: they are punished because it is right after what they have done, because justice demands it, because you must expect to pay for crime. Of course the dislike of punishment will deter others from similar conduct, and it may be that will do the culprit good. But the real justification is the satisfaction of some sense of justice. For this reason a teacher will often find that when he overlooks an offence he loses the sympathy of his class and occasionally the respect of the culprit. This is not to be taken as an argument for consistently fierce punishments, for children must learn that some things can be laughed off and we can smile at occasional offences. But no wise teacher will underestimate a boy's sense of justice and his desire for fair treatment of all in a community.

It is chiefly for this difference between a boy's and an adult's approach to justice that I have such grave doubts about school courts and votes on pupils' behaviour and quite often am sceptical about the discipline enforced and administered by prefects. There are many moral offences that require understanding and treatment rather than what is commonly called punishment. Theft, lying, bullying are offences which call for



careful investigation and treatment. The culprit must be helped to grow into something different, and in order to do this the reasons for his actions must be discovered. Probably the home must be consulted, or in so many instances held to blame for the child's basic unhappiness and insecurity. In some way the school has to give him security, love, and responsibility—but let no one think that is easy or often very possible. It is, however, probable that the majority of later juvenile delinquents could be named by Primary School teachers, and it is at that early stage that treatment is needed. (This is an additional reason for the call for much smaller classes in Primary Schools, for better teaching and more individual attention there, for better discipline to be learned at an earlier age. Irrevocable harm has often been done to a boy's conduct and interest before he is ten—but his frustrations and boredom will not become a menace to society till he is stronger and older.)

It cannot be said too strongly that serious moral offences, need treatment and that the treatment will take time: it is not to be solved merely by some drastic punishment. That is not to say that in certain cases punishment is not part of the treatment. Physical shock may do more than words to emphasize the fact that crime does not pay, but it can only be part of the remedying of mental ill-health.

Mercifully, however, the moral offences in school are few, and the ordinary teacher is much more commonly dealing with rowdiness, slight hooliganism, untidiness, noisiness, constant late-coming, offences against good manners and conduct annoying to others. It is in his treatment of the minor inevitable distractions and annoyances caused by a group of young people together that he will make or mar his own happiness in his career.

It is because 'something must be done about it at once' that most teachers find that they must resort to some form of punishment or restraints. Naturally in a good school these will be few, and the general atmosphere of a classroom be one of freedom and friendly co-operation. To preserve this the experienced teacher will take action at the earliest possible moment, while the beginner all too often overlooks conduct till there is a real crisis. It is better for any writer on educational matters to keep to this general theory and to avoid asking precisely what can be done in schools. It is the practical suggestions which cause



other theorists such annoyance. No practical means of punishment can be suggested which can win widespread approval, probably for the good reason that any penalty ever suggested is in itself undesirable.

An added difficulty in discussing any punishments is that all schools vary so much: the children may be infants or near adults, the school may be boarding or day, it may be in a good or bad area in town or country, the staff may be mixed or men or women only, the school may have long established traditions of discipline not lightly to be upset, it may be co-educational or boys or girls only. Each of these factors may alter the exact methods of any teacher, so discussion of discipline must of necessity be very general. It is, however, generally agreed that if corporal punishment is to be used it should be for boys only.

Let us examine the common methods used in present-day schools. The most common form of correction is through speech, and generally this is sufficient to get the desired result. 'If a child has committed an offence', wrote one man, 'the teacher should talk to him and explain, and with no further punishment he will get him to work. He will then have a greater respect for the teacher.' Some teachers do maintain their order with their tongues only, but it is a habit which can easily degenerate into constant nagging or biting sarcasm. He is, after all, a poor teacher who cannot, if he tries, make an offender look exceedingly foolish before his fellows. That method can be especially effective with the more intelligent and sensitive children but its very effectiveness is its danger, because no one is more hated than the nagging or continuously sarcastic teacher. Some remarks can be bitterly resented and brooded over long after the occasion for them has passed, and that may make it exceedingly difficult to re-establish good relations between the teacher and the boy concerned. A teacher once told me that any boy would rather be caned than 'have a talking to' from him for half an hour, and, knowing him, I was assured of the excellent judgement of boys. Men have told me sometimes of the boasts of their teachers concerning the effects of their cutting remarks and oratory when they presented culprits with a piece of their mind—a piece which invariably seems to have been unpleasant and which generally would better have remained undisclosed.

The power to give vent to our feelings and say whatever we



choose without fear of contradiction or rebuke is most dangerous, for there is a much more common sadism of speech than of deeds in the teaching profession. One learns to be suspicious of all efficient women and most men who claim never to resort to punishments but to control any class with their tongues. 'The stroke of a whip maketh a mark in the flesh; but the stroke of a tongue will break bones.'<sup>1</sup> Perhaps unfairly Kipling says it is the female of the species who is endowed with

*Speech that drips, corrodes, and poisons—even so the cobra bites,  
Scientific vivisection of one nerve till it is raw  
And the victim writhes in anguish—like the Jesuit with the squaw!*<sup>2</sup>

All this is not to say that any sensible adult will not talk to a child by way of correction and try to indicate right conduct in pleasant and clear speech. It is generally all that is necessary if the teacher is liked and respected. But of all forms of punishment speech appears to me to hold the most inherent dangers because of its lasting effect, and the easy ability of its employment as teachers increase in age and experience.

In good schools numbers of boys have certain responsibilities resulting in duties, but also giving privileges. When this is so, disorder or misbehaviour can result in the loss of the privileges and responsibilities, and the punishment be made to fit the crime. Within limits, this is sensible, but it is, again, a form of punishment to be most sparingly employed; for very many boys who offend or break rules are those who require to have a feeling of greater responsibility and not to hold less. The reverse process is often the better policy, the boy's misused energy being transferred into other channels. Certainly no boy should be allowed to feel that he has little value in his community or that he is apart from his fellows. An effective punishment within reason, it is one to be most cautiously employed.

Another method frequently used is that of giving extra work to do, and again this is sensible if reasonably given. The boy who is careless and lazy finds that his slackness involves him in having much more to do. The difficulties are how to carry this out in practice and where to find time for the culprit to attend to his extra work. Where homework is being done, as far as can be judged from our observations, extra work should never

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiasticus 28<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Female of the Species.'



be set for evenings, because too much time is already being sacrificed; and thus, the punishment either becomes a detention or is mixed with a loss of games, both of which are later considered. The exact form of the extra work to be done is also a problem; for he is surely a foolish teacher who allows extra work at his own subject to be known as a punishment.

It is quite bad to discover, as I have done, recently, girls coming home from grammar schools with hundreds of lines of useless material to copy out as a punishment, because a young mistress appeared to be annoyed and so distributed 'lines' in all directions. A case can be made for the learning of tables and the memorizing of facts, but it is horrifying to be told of schools where poetry is learned by heart or written out as a form of punishment. It is reasonable to insist that all work done should be of a good standard and that exercises which fall short of this owing to carelessness should be repeated and brought up to scratch.

Many secondary schools use detention after school as their means of punishment, and some make the offenders attend on an otherwise free morning. That is probably as sensible a scheme as any other suggested, though difficult to enforce for boys from certain homes or those living at great distances, as in country areas. In the majority of schools the attendance on a separate day is impossible, because the school is not open. But there are other serious objections which can be raised: the idea that the school is a place where it can be considered a punishment to have to attend is surely a very bad one, and nothing should be allowed to encourage it. The great and sensible growth of after-school activities, and the enlightened interest of all good teaching today, fit in badly with the picture of the school as a kind of prison. There is also the point that much bad order is caused by the lack of action and movement and the sense of frustration and irritation due to sitting still for long periods, and that the increase of these is hardly a remedy. More, not less, activity is required. Schools have been known, too, where the same sinners met every night or so in the detention room and cheerfully called it their club.

Many young men say that the worst punishment they knew was the loss of games. This varies in effect with the boys' tastes, but it can be quite fiendish in its cruelty at times. The real sadist of a teacher will refuse permission for a boy to play



in his team for some particularly important game (in the boy's eyes). This is a crime which is possibly forgiven in heaven, but will not be forgotten on earth. It may be that certain behaviour on the sports field or during the period of awaiting games should result in their loss, but the general need of all boys is for more games and physical activity and not less. There is little doubt that the teacher who makes a practice of stopping games will be hated, and that in itself should be sufficient to deter anyone from doing so.

There are numerous methods of employing boredom as a means of punishment, but all are of doubtful value. Of the writing of lines there seems no end, and much bad handwriting is caused thereby. A time has to be found for them to be written, and, for the copying, material must be found which is of no literary value. With older pupils, bad conduct in a lesson can result in expulsion from the class, but it is neither sensible nor practicable with children, except to a very limited degree.

Variant systems of weekly reports or notes of any bad conduct sent to a boy's home are used by some schools. It is generally very effective if the parent has to sign and return it, and investigation shows that it is a punishment greatly disliked by children. It has many disadvantages and even dangers: in one home such reports are a mere joke, while in another the matter may be treated as a tragic stain on the family honour. The hasty written remarks of an irritated teacher may be long pondered by the parent and may involve the child in emotional scenes through the evening or even in physical punishment. There is much to be said for the old-fashioned dislike of 'tales out of school', and except for some serious moral lapse the teacher is well advised to deal with all trivial matters in school and talk cheerfully to parents outside.

Another method is to make the headmaster into a kind of cross between the big bad wolf and a god, so that all naughty children can be sent to him, and the terror of his name used as an invocation to peace in any times of difficulty. In some schools the headmaster has the sole powers of corporal punishment. Those methods have the advantages of maintaining one standard of order and conduct for the whole school, and of bringing to the notice of the headmaster all serious cases. It may prevent very young, or very hasty, teachers from giving excessive punishment. A headmaster who did not ask to see all



habitual offenders and all difficult cases would be shirking his job; but, personally, were I a headmaster, I should greatly dislike being made into either the school executioner or ogre. That 'to see the Head' and 'to receive punishment' should be synonymous expressions is surely ridiculous, and the teachers who are not responsible enough to deal with the ordinary offences in their own classrooms would be better in some other profession.

So it can be seen that there are plenty of objections to be found for whatever method of punishment is suggested. The frequent use of any one method leads to abuse and the frequency of punishments at all must make any school disliked. Trivial penalties and petty restrictions are a source of constant irritation. It is for these reasons that a few schools allow no other punishment than corporal punishment. Either a crime is serious enough for drastic treatment or it should not be mentioned—so it is argued. Many people, however, would react still more strongly to the idea of corporal punishment at all.

Those who bitterly oppose the idea of physical punishment generally state that it is a crudity lingering on from the harsh ages of the past and that it is rapidly dying out in all good schools. While it is true that the history of education is full of stories of brutal punishments which would horrify any of us today, it is of course not true that kindness and friendliness in teaching appeared only in our own times. It is also not true that corporal punishment is rapidly disappearing from occasional use in schools—in fact its employment is returning to some places which abandoned it some years ago both in this country and abroad. A number of recent researches by groups of medical men and others have strongly recommended a return to more corporal punishment in schools and have asked that teachers should be given more licence in its use.

During the last ten years I have asked students entering college to be trained as teachers about the discipline in their last schools—usually Grammar Schools. Out of roughly 1,400 replies, 900 thought it moderate and sensible, 200 very lenient, 300 strict. Only forty thought it too strict. In 1,350 cases corporal punishment was used in their schools, but of these 900 said 'only a little', and 150 said 'much'. It was always difficult to find any who considered that it was employed far too much,



though there were a few isolated instances of what appeared to be too drastic treatment of minor offences.

The subject of corporal punishment is one about which people tend to feel violently, and generally in argument about it words become bitter and the worst of motives is imputed to the other side who are termed sloppy sentimentalists or sadistic and ignorant bullies. Having collected the opinions of many who have recently left schools as well as those of many teachers, students, and men in the Forces I propose to put extracts from their views at the end of this chapter, and try here to state briefly the arguments usually employed by both sides.

Those who attack all forms of corporal punishment usually refer to the abuses of the past, to Spartan and Medieval brutalities and to the famous Dr Keate who in the early years of the nineteenth century at Eton 'flogged eight boys on a single summer day and the one mellow regret in the evening of his life was that he had not flogged far more'. (In passing we perhaps ought to be careful in attacking Keate too bitterly; for according to Kinglake he was highly popular and respected by his old boys, some of whom entertained him to dinner on the eve of Waterloo.) Such floggings are anachronisms which are fast disappearing as teachers and pupils have become more friendly and as organized games and school societies have arisen. How can good relationships be established where older and stronger people are using cruelty and pain to enforce their ways on children?

Next, some of the findings of Freudian psychology seemed to support the abolitionists. Closely linked with the instinct of sex is a desire to inflict physical pain on others, and one of the perversions of sex is to flog others or be flogged in order to gain sexual excitement and stimulation. The infliction of pain or the watching of it might lead to later perversions. Thus, the teacher who thinks he cares for the good of the boy, may in fact be rationalizing his motives: he is indulging in a sadistic exercise.

Another reason for abolition is that the victim may have profound feelings of humiliation and bitter resentment after being punished. This will ruin his relationship with the teacher concerned and make good education impossible. There may also be a more easy relationship between parents and teachers if no corporal punishment is used, for sometimes where it is



given parents are angry and feel that their own children are unfairly treated.

Finally, it can be argued that while a case may have been a necessity when there were vast classes of sixty all doing disliked formal exercises, it is quite unnecessary when classes are much smaller and children are enjoying their various activities. Good conditions and good teaching make it possible for a teacher to forget the word 'discipline'. From conviction arising from one or all of these arguments many teachers decide to avoid corporal punishment. This in some cases is strengthened by the fear they have of abusive parents or emotional scenes with a possible victim.

There are, however, many kindly and good-tempered teachers who reject all those arguments, and only say that while frequent or unnecessary corporal punishment is wrong, it can be a most helpful and satisfactory servant to a good teacher. It is untrue that teachers who occasionally use a cane are disliked by boys more than those who do not. More often than not the reverse is true, and the man who takes quick and drastic action is more admired than the one who endures disorder or devises long-drawn-out and irritating penalties. Again, while some parents are hostile to their children ever being punished, many want them to be trained in good behaviour and expect this to be enforced. A number take boys from so-called free-discipline schools and send them to places where order is maintained by corporal punishment when needed. Where parents are hostile their hostility springs from deeper reasons than the fact that Johnny was given the cane.

Research has shown that there is not much in the idea of personal humiliation and resentment, if corporal punishment is an acknowledged part of a school's penalties. It is injustice that causes resentment, and punishment or even criticism which appears unfair will result in it. It is more difficult to refute the charge that corporal punishment may become an outlet for sadism or masochism. This could be a fact, and that possibility appears to me to be the strongest argument for a man deciding never to use a cane or strap. Yet the danger of possible abuse does not rule out the employment of other means to an end in life, and it is impossible to believe that the majority of teachers one sees in schools delight in cruelty—a vice unfortunately not restricted to corporal punishment only. And within strict



bounds a modified form of sadism and masochism is a necessary part of each person's make-up. When all has been said, however, it behoves every person to examine his motives carefully when he employs any form of punishment. Power corrupts.

The case for a sensible use of occasional corporal punishment is largely pragmatic: it is found that very frequently it is an effective and immediate deterrent. A class may be unruly, disobedient, and almost out of hand: a cane can restore order and make conditions easy for the teacher and pleasant again for those who will work. The sooner that unruly and insolent boys find that such behaviour does not pay, the better for all concerned. The old-fashioned discipline of the Public School produced the general respect of its pupils—particularly when they became middle-aged and like Kipling claimed that their system had made them what they were:

*This we learned from famous men  
Teaching in our borders,  
Who declared it was best,  
Safest, easiest, and best—  
To obey your orders.<sup>3</sup>*

It is still useful to learn to obey at times. Far more harm has been done in recent years in allowing children to grow up with no respect for law and order than from any measures of repression. In schools where the headmaster will back up his teachers and both are prepared to take immediate action against those who are wantonly insolent or disorderly, these vices largely disappear and all can live together in harmony and an atmosphere of sensible work. Punishment by the cane can be immediate and adapted to the culprit concerned. He learns that certain conduct does not pay, and once it is over can feel he has paid the penalty and can start afresh. The matter is closed. 'The rod produces an effect which terminates in itself. A child is afraid of being whipped and gets his task, and there's an end on't', said Dr Johnson. At times too, tensions which have built up by repeated irritations and intentional annoyances seem relieved after corporal punishment, and a new and more friendly relationship established again.

If corporal punishment is to be employed it is certainly not 'a last resort'—there are no last resorts when we deal with

<sup>3</sup> 'A School Song.'

children—and it is not the dread weapon to be employed for serious moral offences. It is rather a method a teacher can employ when he feels it is the best method to bring home to a boy that certain quite avoidable conduct will not be tolerated, and that if certain clearly defined actions are committed there is an immediate penalty to be paid. The victim also often feels that in accepting his punishment he has received justice, and if he has shown some stoicism about the matter his personal honour is vindicated rather than being humiliated. Despite the explanations of abolitionists it is difficult not to attach some weight to the views of many young men that at some period of their schooldays a particular caning cured them of certain habits or caused a complete reversal from their slack or bad behaviour.

Amongst old boys of a school there is sometimes a kind of boastful exaggeration about the heroic whackings they personally received for their pranks of unequalled bravado and boyish humour. Much of this is quite untrue and rather silly. It must be observed, however, that the admired teacher or Headmaster who had tamed even these young lions is admired on account of his vigour, his strength of purpose, his strong right arm, 'and the nice conduct of a clouded cane'. I have yet to meet those who looked back on some teacher revered for his long detentions, stopping of games, or unequalled number of 'lines' set.

The quotations that follow probably fill in any gaps in this age-old argument and demonstrate that there is far more support for the occasional use of corporal punishment than is generally stated. It has finally to be remembered that in school a master is dealing with a group of active boys and at times he may need a punishment which 'is acute but not chronic, and which should be forgotten once it is administered'. If the culprit can regain some of his self-respect by the manner in which he takes it, so much the better.

Punishment, however, must always be a fraction only of what is meant by discipline. Children and teachers work together with self-respect and mutual liking when they are interested in each other and in common subjects, societies, and sports. When this is so, boys being boys will prefer more robust and adventurous behaviour to the static common sense of the elderly. Discipline must be seen in the light of the people concerned.



### *Education and the Adult*

*Said Hoseyn 'God gives each man one life, like a lamp,  
 That lamp due measure of oil: lamp lighted—hold high,  
 Its comfort for others to share! once quench it,  
 what help is left?'<sup>1</sup>*

*I cannot rest from travel: I will drink  
Life to the lees . . .  
How dull it is to pause, to make an end  
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!  
As tho' to breathe were life.<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Robert Browning, 'Muleykeh'.

<sup>2</sup> Tennyson, 'Ulysses'.

*beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars until I die.*<sup>3</sup>

Everyone now recognizes the great advantages bestowed on the country by the system of free compulsory education, whereby at present all children between the ages of five and fifteen must receive instruction. The compulsion between these two dates has in many quarters, however, encouraged an insidious heresy: the belief that education consists solely in something that happens between the age of five and the end of a term in which the fifteenth birthday occurs. As soon as this happy day arrives, the boy can proudly leave school and enter the real world. There is extra money for the parents from his wages, and narrow trousers and cigarettes for the boy. With schoolmasters, lessons, and everything under the title of 'education' he has finished for life. When he has become a man, he puts away childish things.

Previous generations, though worse educated, did not suffer quite so greatly from this common belief, and people, at various periods in their life and varying in length of time according to their ability and wealth, attended schools, Sunday schools for elementary instruction, and night schools. It was at least recognized that education was something worth obtaining at any time in life. Young ladies of the wealthy classes did, however, go to 'finishing schools' to be polished off.

It would be foolish to assert that everyone thought about education in this manner or gave up all attempts at learning after the age of fourteen, because we have only to observe up and down the country the secondary schools, the public schools, the evening institutes, and variously named night schools and classes, the continuation schools, the colleges of further education, the university extension lectures, the polytechnics, and the magnificent work done at such places as Birkbeck College, an internal evening college of London University. Others will immediately recall the great value of many clubs and settlements, the courses arranged by the W.E.A., and colleges such as Morley College, catering for culture without ideas of examination or vocational gain. The varied activities of many Churches could often be termed truly educational. All these places, as well as many others not

<sup>3</sup> Tennyson, 'Ulysses'.



listed here, should be remembered when we attempt to generalize. Yet when all has been said, those who have taught in poorer neighbourhoods in ordinary schools and who have attempted to advertise to boys and girls leaving school the numerous evening activities organized by their local authorities know only too well how few ever took advantage of their opportunities. The idea that education ends at fifteen is too deeply ingrained, and this is often aided by the sense of escape from petty restrictions and from what has appeared as wasted time out of touch with reality.

At the same time, everyone who knew anything about education, and all those who proceeded with further training, have stressed most strongly the fact that it is only in the training after fifteen that the full value of much that has gone before can be obtained. Judgement, appreciation, and balanced understanding only appear to begin to make themselves felt in the middle teens. Thus, every parent with sense and sufficient income has tried to keep his children at school till sixteen or eighteen. All too often in the past money has had to be the deciding factor, and many have been unable to afford these 'luxuries'. This is largely no longer the case: investigations such as those in the recent Crowther and Albemarle Reports show that an increasing number of children are staying on at schools after the age of fifteen or are receiving further part-time education. Those who do not, cease from education not because of lack of cash but because of lack of desire and interest or because parents see no value in further periods of instruction.

Before examining what may be attempted after this age, it is advisable to define the general aims of schemes of further or adult education. The first group consists of those wishing to improve their professional qualifications and to obtain further trade training. Secondly, there are those who desire more knowledge about subjects not directly related to their employment—for example, those wishing to learn a language or study music or literature. Thirdly, there is a larger, vaguer group who like belonging to the community of people attending schools, colleges, or institutes, whose activities are more largely social and recreational, though they may also be termed 'educational'.

Any writer at present attempting to deal with adult education ought to acknowledge the general debt to Sir Richard



Livingstone's fine statement of the case in *The Future in Education* and *Education in a World Adrift*. He has shown that for many subjects, a full appreciation cannot be fully obtained by a high degree of general intelligence or fine training in youth; maturity is an essential beginning. In doing this, some may think that inadvertently he has understated what can be achieved with pupils under eighteen, but even if this be so, he has shown once and for all the great opportunities and advantages of further education and lifelong increase in knowledge and culture. As man grows older, far from becoming inevitably more restricted in ability to learn, appreciate, and enjoy, he can discover increased pleasure and ease in entering fresh avenues. In art, literature, politics, and many sciences, only by growing older can we appreciate the best.

Having had the privilege of doing educational revision with young men in the Forces my own opinions were strengthened in this view. After the first feelings of surprise at how much simple mathematics or arithmetic (for example) had been forgotten, it was astonishing to discover how easily those who wished could get back this knowledge. The learners understood why they wished to re-learn these things, the subject now appeared to have value for them, there was no problem of discipline or youthful fear in asking questions; and thus a few weeks could generally achieve what originally took many months to acquire. It is, of course, always easier to revise a subject we once knew something about than to learn new matter, but many have also found it a source of great pleasure. Increase in age and experience gives meaning to things which formerly seemed without sense or value.

That was even more marked in classes for discussion, in talks on art, literature, religion, science, sex, sport, current affairs, politics, and reconstruction. Understanding and further interest came from the men's background, their adventures at work, from the conversations of their friends, from their travels and general experience. Discussions became much more intelligent and practical than with the brighter pupils of the top forms of secondary schools. To discuss life, some experience of living is necessary.

What then may be attempted in fact to achieve satisfaction for the various aims of adult education?

Regarding vocational training after the age of sixteen, there



are a large number of suggestions, but the scheme turns chiefly on the possibilities of whole or part-time training to the age of eighteen. In the original plan after the last war there was to be part-time training for all young workers, and that would have been partially vocational. The scheme has been worked with considerable success in Rugby and for the workers in a number of large and enlightened firms. If it can be made compulsory or considerably expanded, as suggested in the Education Act of 1944 and the Crowther Report, the young workers will not only learn their trades, but have time to increase their knowledge in various ways while doing so, their progress increasing their present wages. They will be able to learn at times when they are not physically tired, as are many of those who have to study at evening institutes. It should be possible for wise directors of the training schools to achieve a sense of reality and value in their courses by training their pupils both in the technique of their trade and in the deeper underlying principles. At the same time, cultural, physical, and religious matters must not be forgotten.

Adult vocational education is something beyond this scheme, but its early nature must largely depend on whether or not part-time training till the age of eighteen is to be given. Where it is done, it seems obvious that any evening educational activities will not be vocational, but rather in the nature of those undertaken in good clubs, with the emphasis on recreation and general intelligent interest. Where there is no part-time education, there will still be a need for vocational work in evening institutes. It is most important that where this is done, the training should not be narrowly interpreted, and that there should be good opportunities for sports, physical training, intelligent discussions, and general cultural subjects. In some way working hours must be short enough for young men and women not to be physically exhausted before they attend these classes. Fatigue is more the problem of the boy or young person starting work than of his more experienced colleagues.

Evening institutes must do more than cater for the young worker; for men and women of all ages wish at times to improve their qualifications. Thus, there must be opportunities for technical studies with practical work with tools and machines for those who wish to further their knowledge or learn something of a new trade. If the institutes which supply



these facilities can also offer good libraries, quiet rooms, and chances of lighter study and activities, they will be the more popular. The tradition that any place connected with education must have an atmosphere of depression or solemnity must be stamped out. An equal danger is that it should become a vast and soulless factory of instruction. It may be a good thing if the architects of the institutes can entirely forget the traditional style of scholastic buildings.

In addition to classes and courses of instruction arranged for the evenings, there is a great need for many organized short courses, something on the lines of those so frequent in the Forces. It should be possible for the ambitious and able worker to improve his qualifications and make himself a more valuable asset to the country by gaining increased knowledge of his trade. Courses might well vary in length or intensity, and workers be set free with full wages to attend them. Promotions and increased wages could depend on good work done at them. They would also supply opportunities for those who wished to change the nature of their work or to move to another branch of their industry. The financial arrangements are obviously difficult, but are not insurmountable; possibly the cost can be shared between the industry, the worker, and the State. Better trained and more satisfied workmen are a national asset. In some instances, there may be summer courses, which are partially recreational in nature and have their centres fixed in rural surroundings or by the sea. In large towns, on the other hand, there might be part-time or evening instruction, when additional periods of leisure might be given in compensation. The conditions of the courses would change with the nature of the industry and its location, but the important thing is that there should be the opportunities, and an end made of the dead-end jobs and hopeless stagnation of many trades at present.

In the past while some schools and colleges for workers on day-release have been a success, some have failed largely because of the attitude of the young workers themselves. To them such attendance was a further interference with their liberty and a mere compulsory confirmation of a schooling they had grown to dislike. Little work was done at the continuation school and there were considerable problems of discipline and teacher-pupil relationships. The best schools have survived and convinced their pupils about the value of their further



studies. I personally wonder if short residential courses would not often be more valuable. The young worker would 'go to college' for a short period or periods, have the excitement and advantages of residential life, contact with other youths he had not previously met, and in completely new surroundings the opportunities for discussion on cultural and religious topics. The experiments I have known seem to have been a great success.

In addition to vocational classes and the part-time education of workers released from industry there must be opportunities for intellectual and generally interesting studies of wide interests. Many people of advancing age have no ambition to spend their extra time in workshops or lecture-rooms for trade training, but do welcome the chance to meet in pleasant surroundings to learn a new language, to prepare themselves to get the best out of a coming holiday, to study their hobbies, or to increase their knowledge because of real interest in some subject. They wish to be men rather than robots or animals. Thus, there will always be a need for evening classes and lectures, for centres for the practice of crafts or the arts. Those will flourish as their surroundings are pleasing and the teachers or lecturers well informed and competent in instructing. Adequate opportunities for self-expression and discussion must always be found, as well as accommodation for those informal talks and arguments between the students, which form often the most valuable part of adult education.

The cultural classes of necessity must vary with the type and numbers of those attending and the supply of good teachers. Payment must be sufficient to attract the most able people, and instructors must not consist solely of tired day teachers who are eking out their small salaries by extra work at night.

Not only is there a need for the expansion of existing facilities for evening instruction, but there is a great opportunity for the extension of numerous schemes of short full-time courses of a month, two, or three months, in which languages, history, religion, current affairs, politics, art, music, philosophy, and a host of other subjects could be offered for selection in residential colleges. As more men and women find how much more interesting these are when they have some background of experience, and as facilities are given by the State and employers, summer or short-time courses will flourish. It should not be beyond the abilities of an able Ministry of Education



to organize such schemes in the most liberal and attractive manner, as it is certainly not beyond the powers of the State to arrange the financial side. First the value and need of such schemes must be brought home to those who have power.

Thirdly, there will always be those who enjoy belonging to societies or clubs which are largely social and recreational, though in many respects they are also truly educational. They wish to enjoy the society of friends who are interested in the same things, and to be able to meet in good surroundings for general social activities, sports, music, and art, and many other intellectual pursuits. Lectures and short courses may well be combined with them. Possibly many Churches can sponsor those things, and they should be given aid to do so. A common central interest is always the making of such institutions, and a Church is especially able to give that. But religion must be more commonly recognized as being intermingled with the whole of life and not seen as an occasional pious extra or luxury.

With all the various adult schemes, the need of physical education should be constantly remembered, and facilities and encouragement supplied for all to take part in them. Indoor and outdoor sports, athletics, travel clubs, hiking and cycling clubs, camping, swimming, and sailing, as well as various forms of dancing and gymnastics, must be encouraged wherever education is carried on, so that its growth in one branch helps to strengthen another. The linking up of those schemes with the health, medical, and dental services will do more to encourage strength and vitality in physical as well as mental well-being. Frank advice and instruction in sex questions should be available at the various centres of adult education.

A further ideal to many thinking people appears to be the encouragement of religious activity wherever groups of people meet. There might well be lectures and discussions on ethics, philosophy, world religions, and Christianity. Various denominations should make available the services of their best thinkers. The minister of religion—to use a general term—should expect to be mixed up with the all-round activities of thinking people everywhere, and be trained and qualified to take his part in the wide scheme of adult education.

The success of all schemes of adult vocational and cultural education depends largely on a new general attitude towards it. The older ideas of education as being something connected



with small desks, stuffy classrooms, and thin and disappointed pedants must be killed once and for all; and for these must be substituted that of a place of light and life and enthusiastic activity. The first practical step towards it is the provision of fine buildings, grounds, and equipment, spacious halls and comfortable club-rooms well lit and heated, as well as the training of leaders, organizers, and teachers for that specialized task. The recent Albemarle Report giving a fine lead along these lines must be implemented as fast as possible. All schemes must be elastic and adaptable to the varying needs and tastes of those they serve, as well as being so conceived that they can receive impetus from voluntary bodies, Churches, and the existing schools, institutes, and colleges. This new way of sanity and enlightenment must cost money and although the expense would be partially borne by the State, some of it should be met by those receiving the benefits. It will be money wisely invested, bringing a good interest in health of mind and body to all. The citizens of a democracy which is to live must have both intelligence and knowledge with opportunities to employ them. Where there is no vision the people perish.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### *Teachers*

We go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby, the regular education system. C-L-E-A-N, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W-I-N, win, D-E-R, der, winder, a casement. When a boy knows this out of the book, he goes and does it.'

'Mind that. You always keep on in the same path, and do them things that you see your father do, and when you die you'll go right slap to Heaven and no questions asked.'

'I never thrashed a boy in a hackney-coach before,' said Mr Squeers, when he stopped to rest. 'There's inconveniency in it, but the novelty gives it a sort of relish, too!'<sup>1</sup>

Dr Keate was little more (if more at all) than five feet in height, and was not very great in girth, but within this space was concentrated the pluck of 10 battalions.<sup>2</sup>

the tenderest teacher  
and kindest creature in ould Donegal.  
Checkin' the crazy ones, coaxin' onaisy ones,  
Liffin' the lazy ones on wid the stick.<sup>3</sup>

The teacher is not a Big Friend, diffusing 'smiles and soap' to his little band; he is the representative of something of vital importance beyond himself and must make demands accordingly.<sup>4</sup>

THE QUOTATIONS JUST given show a picture of a school-master as depicted by a novelist, a biographer, and an educational writer, in the last century and more recently. Dickens depicted in Mr Squeers the stock figure of the brutal master who kept a school for profit. He is a mixture of sadism, callous greed, indifference to human misery, ignorance, and humbug. In him the man of the nineteenth century saw the ogre figure of his youth, the nightmare of his later years, and was able to project his hatred of the ignorant pomposity which he imagined

<sup>1</sup> Charles Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby*.

<sup>2</sup> A. W. Kinglake, *Esther*.

<sup>3</sup> A. P. Graves, 'Father O'Flynn'.

<sup>4</sup> G. H. Bantock, *Authority in Education*.



he saw in many teachers he met. The schoolmaster had been useful, of course, but he represented the aspects of nature a gentleman disliked most. (Dickens added to Squeers a kind of zest in evil doing, and an ignorant but homely turn of phrase which made him almost attractive and allowed him to steal every scene on which he entered. But so did the nightmare schoolmaster of our youth.)

Dr Keate, with the occasional aid of the British Army, quelled the overcrowded schoolrooms of Eton and apparently restored order even on its playing fields so that those who had stoically endured these found little difficulty on the field of Waterloo. He appears in educational text-books as the stock flogging figure, but was also endowed with the stock British virtues—love of fair play, love of the school chapel, love of the home, and brazen courage. A crowd of boys was outside his room so Keate proceeded to birch each in turn, only to be halted momentarily by the protests of the thirtieth, as he lowered his trousers, that they were a Confirmation Class. 'We must be fair', he said and so continued with the final half-dozen. In school chapel he exhorted his charges to obey the Sermon on the Mount adding, 'and you will be pure in heart, or I'll flog you!' In the bosom of his family he was known as 'the dear doctor' and in the true British tradition he was revered by his old boys.

A great number of the nineteenth-century schoolmasters of fiction and of biographies are only slight variations of these figures. Increasingly their devotion to the school and their sentimental attachment to the school spirit, the school song, the school motto, and the school tie, has overwhelmed the aspect of ignorance or sadism. Even the best in fiction, even the most starry-eyed sentimentalists such as Mr Chips, at times inculcated the school spirit with a strong arm. No modern school-teacher using up-to-date methods seems to have caught the imagination of novelist or dramatist. The business-like master for ever arranging school visits, medical examinations, and intelligence tests, and the young mistress of frightening efficiency for ever correcting the girls' home-work remains still to be memorably depicted.

In the original chapter of this book a collection of pen-pictures of teachers liked and disliked was made from accounts given me in the Royal Air Force. Re-reading them seemed



only to suggest that pleasant and able people were liked and sarcastic and ignorant bores were disliked. The question of what qualities made the great teacher or composed a bad one remained largely unanswered. Questions to students entering a Training College for Teachers about the qualities which a good teacher should possess produced a list of all the virtues known to man, but those characteristic of a bad teacher were perhaps more revealing. Four characteristics are most usually found: lack of control over pupils, bad temper, lack of interest in pupils, and lack of interest in the subject. These have been named some two hundred times. Four others were named about half as often: lack of clarity, sarcasm, mannerisms of speech, and faulty knowledge. Considerable attention has already been given to the question of discipline so little more need be said here. Lack of control over classes is the most noticeable vice but bad tempers and sarcasm are also detested. Excessive use of corporal punishment was seldom mentioned. What seems most common and is most detested is the rather colourless individual with no great enthusiasm and no apparent vices. Day by day he (or she) continues the dull round of routine with a complete lack of interest in the subjects taught and an equal indifference to the pupils, or so it appears to the pupils. Many of the teachers so criticized have probably considerable interests in both, but life has taught them to be restrained and to keep passions and enthusiasm under strict control. Increasing age has great dangers for the teacher; for it is all too easy to become cynical and indifferent, increasingly critical of the current behaviour of children and adolescents. Many of us, too, continue to pass on the same information that we acquired in our schools and colleges and make no vital attempt to keep up to date. The books and music we give the young are the classics which we feel they ought to admire but for which our own enthusiasm died long ago in the past—if we ever had any genuine love of them. Pseudo-appreciative humbug very easily besets us.

Thus, the bad teacher is no longer a cruel or vicious person, given to violence in speech or conduct, but the prematurely elderly with the life gone out of him, the grey colourless personality whose interest has drained away.

It follows that the good teacher is the opposite of what has just been described, but perhaps we can approach his true function more profitably in another way, rather than reversing

*one of these*



the bad characteristics shown above. A teacher is a coach and exists to teach something. When I decided to learn to play golf I found a professional coach and put myself in his hands. He undoubtedly knew a great deal about golf, could play well himself, knew exactly what he wanted me to become, and what he proposed to teach me each lesson. He was cheerful and encouraging and I enjoyed his company. He was possibly fortunate in his teaching because his pupils only came to him when they were anxious to learn to play golf and this they wished to do as quickly as possible. He was not unduly worried by my backwardness or slow progress but patiently advised some further instruction—my payments undoubtedly soothed his tired nerves. Possibly he also had private and more spiritual aims—to train my character, to endue me with loyalty to the club, to develop me as an individual and fit me for citizenship, but I did not pay him for these. I paid for good straight instruction in the elements of golf and this I received. (Had I carried out his later advice—to forget him and his instruction, go away and play two hours a day for a few years—I should be a good golfer.)

It would seem to me that this illustration has much to commend it when applied to ordinary education. The teacher really exists to teach something. He needs to understand what that 'something' is, and how his pupil can most easily and efficiently learn it. He needs to give his pupil immediate and continuous practice, to rectify mistakes and encourage all good progress. He aims at securing a definite result. A child cannot read and needs to be taught how to do this efficiently and speedily if possible. It must also be done so that the child enjoys reading and wants to read. A new world should be opened up. One of the faults of some modern education has been the over-interest in the psychology of the pupil, in child development, the study of the individual and the encouragement of social adjustment and the under-valuing of what is to be taught, rather than solid instruction in some subject. A burlesque would be of the good lady who said she knew her pupils could barely read and write but she gave them something more important: beautiful characters.

There is an immediate and practical end of education as well as a long-term policy. 'The end of the mariner's art is not the salvation of the souls of them that sail with him, but the safe



landing of their persons and goods at the port,' said Jeremy Taylor.

The good teacher needs to be first of all a clear and logical instructor who knows his subjects and can explain them lucidly and in logical order. The pupil finds it easy to learn from him and acquires through his success a desire to learn more. Naturally, the good teacher remains good tempered and is willing to explain points fully, to reiterate his instruction, to be patient with those who do not learn easily.

The importance of the virtue of patience has probably been underestimated in educational writings of recent years, but it was repeatedly stressed when I asked young men in the Air Force to describe good and bad teachers they had known. Some acknowledged that they had not been very bright at school: the poor teacher had seemed to take their failure to understand as a kind of personal insult, an affront to his dignity. The result had been rages of ill temper or sarcastic remarks. The good teacher had remained unruffled by persistent ignorance and his patience was such that he could repeatedly explain difficulties with cheerful good temper. It is the quality so magnificently shown by teachers of educationally sub-normal children (I write rather in admiration than as one capable of demonstrating such a quality—the repeated failure of pupils to understand my own lucid teaching drove me frantic and children seemed to see through even my attempts at Christian forbearance).

The ability to impart patient, clear, and lucid instruction, to make difficult problems plain, to plan exercises and practice so that a technique is mastered with interest and pleasure, is the essential mark of a first-rate teacher. The 'born teacher' has a further gift: he can make the most difficult subjects appear understandable though the ability is generally not so much a gift as the result of careful training in method and wise preparation of each lesson. It implies tackling each subject by easy steps and stages, relating each new process to something already known, and having a clear and idiomatic method of speech. It calls for good practical illustrations, and should come finally as the result of experience as well as from thoughtful preparation. Those who have worked in Teachers' Training Colleges know the vast improvement in pure teaching powers that is acquired by an intelligent student from the time of entry to his



leaving college. A three-year course of training will bring even better results, for practice and study cannot be rushed: time is also necessary.

Education is, of course, a much wider term than instruction and consists of much more than the assistance of a pupil to master a subject or technique, although that has not been claimed as of major importance. A good teacher not only patiently instructs in the present, but is preparing his pupil for the future. He is successful in so far as the children wish to know more of the particular subject, have their enthusiasm and interest awakened, and find new avenues opening before them. The great teacher, as distinct from the good instructor, leaves his classes with awakened interest in life and with alert and inquiring minds. It is more important that he should awaken and train an appetite than stuff them with purely satisfying food for the day.

To achieve a real passion for a strong interest in a subject the pupil must be able to work at it himself and begin to find good results of his labours. I recently asked a boy of ten for his views on a student's teaching—a student considered by most of us as being on the edge of failure as a teacher. 'He's quite good, I think', he said. 'You see he let's you get on with your own work without stopping you all the time to explain.' I agreed that the customer is probably right, and the student should pass.

A further point must be added to the description of a good teacher: he is a man who has a control of his classes and maintains good discipline. What this can mean has already been discussed, but it must result in the pupil acquiring self-control, assurance, and courtesy. As a result of being with a good teacher the boy acquires standards which he will carry with him for life; he will also not be moulded to a pattern but will have all his good personal characteristics encouraged. He will be more truly himself because the teacher was good.

If it is easy to describe what a bad teacher is like, and more difficult to be definite about a good teacher, it is next to impossible to do justice to the great teacher. Very many people believe they have known him or her, yet their descriptions seem curiously inadequate and to differ widely. The great teacher is great not only in his efficiency and character but in his individuality. One great teacher seems to be completely

unlike another. When St Paul attempted to describe the qualities which made up the true Christian, he included most known virtues but finally added: 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.' The quality which lifts mere goodness to greatness is love both for the Christian and for the teacher. It is a love of the subjects taught, a love of the pupils for their own sakes, and a love of teaching. We may assume that the great teacher is knowledgeable about his subject, is up-to-date and alert about contemporary developments, but his greatness will spring from the depth of his own appreciation and love for what he is teaching. He is not trying to point out and demonstrate the beauties of poetry but trying to find words for the reverence and enjoyment he feels. We may assume that he has an understanding of child psychology and is practised in maintaining easy discipline and encouraging the personal development of each pupil, but his greatness will be recognized as he has a real love for them. This love will obviously be shown in very different ways according to their ages; what would be kindness and security for an infant would be sentimental slush for the adolescent; yet the love is shown in the caring about the welfare and interests of each, in unobtrusive sympathy and encouragement, in self-effacement, and most of all in understanding. The real thing is so much more than carefully planned actions.

The great teacher increasingly has a love of teaching and finds his work an art and a science. His love of his subjects and of his pupils results in the love of his work and his teaching becomes his art and his life. It is that which has been the satisfaction of great teachers in all ages and they have found in their work good measure, pressed down, shaken together and flowing over.



## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### *The Great School*

*This fond attachment to the well-known place,  
Whence first we started into life's long race,  
Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,  
We feel it even in age, and at our latest day.*

William Cowper, 'Tirocinium'.

*And not the lightest lead, but trembling teems  
With golden visions and romantic dreams!*

(Samuel Rogers, 'The Pleasures of Memory').

IT IS CURIOUS how many Englishmen look back on their school days in a kind of rosy haze, and however anxious they were in youth to leave, however much they grumbled about the school's bad food, harsh punishments, stupid rules, and ignorant teachers when they suffered there, they remember all in later years with a kind of sentimental reverence. In fact it appears that poor physical amenities, eccentric or foolish teachers, and out-of-date buildings are almost essential for the strongest nostalgic memories. The cane once tasted so bitterly becomes in memory a sugar cane. My own College Song, written in the nineteenth century and inspired by the Public School songs of the period, reveres the ancient institution for training teachers and honours its 'Alma Mater'. The good lady later reappears as a 'Spartan Mother' when the old penurious and harsh conditions are faintly recalled.

Thus, although the mass of Englishmen have only a tepid interest in education in general and certainly dislike paying for teachers' salaries and new buildings, they have an unequalled attachment to the Old School and the Old Boys. Their school tie for life is reflected in the School Tie they so persistently wear. Some in old age are still wearing the faded school blazer, the ancient scarf, and the Old Boys' tie: they were outstanding in youth for their refusal to wear the school cap.

The idea of the 'great school' exists in all classes of the

community but supremely amongst those who have been to Public Schools or Boarding Schools. (In a short book it is better not to attempt to give a definition of a Public School.) What makes such a school 'a great school'?

In a letter to G. R. Parkin in 1875, Edward Thring of Uppingham concisely put the case for public boarding schools which has been repeated so frequently since:

There is no point on which my convictions are stronger than on the power of boarding schools in forming national character. . . . The learning to be responsible, and independent, to bear pain, to play games, to drop wealth and rank and home luxury, is a priceless boon. I think myself that it is this which has made the English such an adventurous race: and with all their faults—and you know how decided my views are on this side—the public schools are the cause of this manliness. It is the fixed idea with every Englishman in the lump that it is the thing to send a boy to a public school, and the ordinary English gentleman would think he lost caste by not doing so. There the boy world becomes a definite world in itself, and school life and its doings an important factor in the social world. . . . Only those who have time to stay five, six, or seven years in it have a chance. This at once silently decides that none but the monied classes can form the bulk of the school.

Nearly all those points have been stressed again and again both by those defending and by those attacking the public school system. Here, it is claimed, the boy lives in a model world, with freedom from many of the home worries and oppressions of extra evening work; here in the prefect system he learns powers of leadership; here he may best obtain a true religious education; here a boy is free from the evils of the bad home or coddling parents.

In recent years most of those statements have been questioned, and bitter and prejudiced books and articles have been written attacking everything about Public Schools. There are two general lines of attack: that they are undesirable places in themselves, giving an education narrow and unnatural; and that they are excellent places but the preserves of the rich and privileged so that the idea of equality of opportunity makes their continued existence undesirable. Those who regard them as undesirable places in a modern world stress that the real unit of life is the family and that a true education can only be found by living in it, the school being a supplement to good



home training. In a family one learns to live with people of various ages and both sexes and to appreciate the wide interests and problems of all. The good home offers a child a particular culture, the interests of the parents, and allows him to grow up with sympathy for the problems of money, religion, age, entertainment. The boarding school places him in the unnatural world of a particular age-group, a boys' (or girls') world, remote from the problems of contemporary life, and apart from the desirable mixing of sexes. Children so trained tend to become exclusive in outlook and to develop feelings of superiority over their 'less fortunate' brethren. Class distinctions are thus fostered by the acquirement of this outlook, by the very attempt never to exhibit it, by ignorance of working-class conditions, by the regular existence away from all poverty and unemployment and distress.

The powers of so-called leadership, acquired from the giving of orders and lording it over younger boys, by the prefect system, are all strengthened by easy passages to the older universities, the confidence found from knowing at all times the rules of life and correct conduct in this false boy-world, and the assumption of a code of polished manners and the distinct speech accent of the ruling class. The religious virtues encouraged by the school chapel are little more than the aristocratic ethics of the last century to be summarized in the six commandments:

Thou shalt not loaf.  
Thou shalt not gloat.  
Thou shalt not side.  
Thou shalt not funk.  
Thou shalt not whine.  
Thou shalt not sneak.

The religion so acquired in the revered school chapel had little carry-over into later life. Few and far are the public school man's later church attendances. Thus, the undesirable training gave only the veneer of real leadership and character, the kind of thing which made excellent tea planters and Empire builders in the last century and endowed them and their ladies with the polished stupidity and lack of understanding of other classes and peoples which have abolished the Empire in this century.

Much can be said against every point raised in this line of



attack: the home in which the public school boy after all lives for a third of each year may seem even more important than when he is there all the time, the burlesqued virtues are nevertheless real virtues, and so on. Or the attack may centre on the line: such schools are the home of privilege. The education so given is excellent and the result is that a ruling class is created—a class not found because of natural ability but because of training. Boys so trained get to appreciate the virtues of their own companions, and when they have they secure appointments with other public school men. A Prime Minister probably appoints his Cabinet from the Public Schools he knows and if possible from his own old school. Laugh as much as we will at the old school tie, the totem

patch of rainbow hue  
Mixed as Life and crude as Sin<sup>1</sup>

still has a vast effect on British commercial, ecclesiastical, social, and political life. If such schools are to continue to exist they must be made available for all.

Again, many of these claims can be questioned. If, as seems probable to me, the Public Schools continue and far more places are increasingly given on merit to boys and girls from all classes of society, will their distinctive ethos change? And is the Boarding School as such the desirable place for children only of high ability? What types of child really benefit most from the life of such a school? The older public schools had no nonsense about high scholarship needed for entrance and were in a sense the forerunners of the Modern Comprehensive Schools.

So the argument could be continued—an argument which is still important. We have always to remember that if wealthy or educated people continue to send their children to Private, Preparatory, and Public Schools they may well be less interested in what happens in State Schools and will feel no urgent need for reforms there. We have to notice also that Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, and Americans seem to manage without such an important Public School system and consciousness, and to be free from much British prejudice and class feeling. Do they also miss much we enjoy?

At any rate we have to admit that the accounts we have of

<sup>1</sup> Rudyard Kipling, 'The Totem'.



'great schools' in the past describe Public Schools. This may possibly be because they are the oldest Secondary Schools and have produced the mass of writers who have described their school days. It may be that these schools have been 'great' in a way others have not. Today, however, the distinction is blurred between the Public Schools and many other Secondary Schools. A definition of a Public School is never found satisfactory by any two educationists. Some Public Schools are now day schools, some are mixed, many draw grants from Local Education Authorities or the State, and many take in numbers of boys paid for by Local Authorities. The Public School curriculum has been so widened, and other schools have now adopted the Prefect and House System so enthusiastically that it is most difficult to differentiate between very many places. While this mixing up and smoothing out process is being completed it is still important to ask what we now mean by a 'great school'.

It is probably easier for a boarding school to be considered great because it must assume a larger place in its pupils' thoughts. There they must remain day and night so that all a boy's hobbies, sports, and interests are centred there and the kindness and help he receives must generally be from teachers and not from home and friends. The boarding school also is the source of all happiness and excitement, the living centre of the boys' world, even more important because that world has become so restricted. It can also be a far more unhappy place than any day school, for the same reasons. We may assume that many boarding schools will continue to exist both on account of their prestige and history, and because many parents have to travel or have work which keeps them out of their homes. Children from homes where parents are dead, ill, divided, or frequently absent will be better off in boarding schools. There may be many who temperamentally are better suited there. It is possible that the extension of camps schools where pupils can stay for months together, and the increase in school journeys—perhaps for longer periods—may provide much of the social training and opportunities for independence and responsibility which have been among the claims of Public Schools.

The great school of the future must certainly offer what the great schools of the past apparently gave their pupils. A very



important factor has been the generous staffing, so that master and boy could really get to know each other, and personal friendship was easy and natural. More generous staffing, implying also well-trained and able staffs, is the first essential of the future great school.

The school too must retain the love of its old pupils and secure the co-operation of parents. This, in fact, is easier to achieve than is often imagined. My own experience of a school in a terribly poor neighbourhood of North London was a revelation of the love and loyalty of most unlikely people. When the buildings were partly destroyed in the war tremendous concern was expressed. Something exactly the same must be rebuilt on the same spot! No feature of English education is more marked than the present growth of teacher and parent co-operation. Within a few hundred yards from where I am writing the parents of a secondary modern school are constructing a swimming bath for the children. The increased loyalty and tangible help given by parents help much to give the possibilities of greatness to a school.

Before considering other essential qualities it may be of interest to look again at a few of the descriptions given by ordinary servicemen in the Royal Air Force when they tried to describe what they would consider to be a great school.

It would be of a good size, incorporating sports grounds and if possible a swimming pool. Workshops and handicraft centres would be installed, not only for school time, but for anyone who wished to work after school hours.

A great school would be a place where children were taught the theory and practice of good citizenship and the importance of communal life, where they would realize the fact that all people are members of the community and are of value to the community and that the labourer is of equal importance to the nation as the artisan, and the artisan just as valuable as the professional worker. It would be a place where it was recognized that what a person does is of less importance than what a person is.

The great school would be inclined towards producing good citizens who are prepared to use their natural abilities for the good of all people. I should like to see religious training take a more prominent place. If a pupil has ability, nothing should be allowed to prevent it being fully developed. It would have young teachers, medical inspections every year, out-of-door work, and be equipped with a cinema.



A great school would be an institution where the ideal of democracy were perpetuated and flourished as among the living. As a youth is doubtless influenced by his environment, I should suggest that the first requirements are: architecture of interior excellence, a fine choice of site, and a modernistic technique of teaching.

A great school would be a place where you could mix with a crowd of chaps of your own age or perhaps a little older, and you would all be treated as individuals and not as schoolchildren. It would be a place where you would be allowed to spend as much time as you like to put in after school on any subject you preferred. It would have to be immaculately clean and also have a certain homeliness about it, special advantages for boys who have a will to learn. Above all, it must have a library full of interesting books from A to Z.

The extracts touch on many most sensible points, but largely, like the other suggestions made throughout this book, belong to the requisites of all schools in the future. Every adequate school must have good buildings and equipment, gymnasiums, sports fields, as well as trained teachers in sufficient numbers, a varied curriculum, and a sensible arrangement of lessons. Every adequate school must prepare its pupils for vocation as well as leisure, as citizens as well as individuals, in arts and literature as well as science and mathematics, in everything concerning health for body, mind, and spirit. Every adequate school will seek to train its pupils in self-discipline and to develop self-government, encouraging self-respect as well as initiative and a spirit of adventure. Things like those should always be demanded, and with men of goodwill and determination can be secured.

Modern life, it may appear, has tended to raise the minimum standards in all things, and to produce conditions of comfort, work, or leisure that are largely satisfactory and adequate. (This is, of course, not fully realized yet.) But this very standardization of minimum requirements has its dangers. Enough comes to be considered as good as a feast. Eight hours must be 'put in' each day at the place of business—eight hours regardless of whether there is little to do or a great glut of work. Promotion comes slowly, always through sufficient time being spent in the right places and with few mistakes made. Thus, in education there is the danger that men will be satisfied with adequacy. The doctors will certify that each building has an exact amount of light and air for each child, that it is kept at



constant temperature, and that its sanitary arrangements are above suspicion. The inspectors will see that the curriculum is of the right type and of the recognized general standard, that the teachers are trained and teach for the required time. And the school will in time be much better than the majority of those now open. But continuous organization and tests by yardsticks, however accurately applied, are not enough. Those may make an adequate school, but the great school is something more.

The great school of the future must start with those advantages, but add to them. In buildings many of the modern schools are excellent and the air, light, and warmth exactly right; yet there is little in them to love or admire. Everywhere has the same uninteresting excellence and sufficiency. A more imaginative course will be to allow much more freedom in design, so that each building can have some personality of its own, some features which can be regarded with pride and admiration, and remembered long afterwards as the outstanding characteristic. A very helpful recent sign has been the inclusion in new buildings of some contemporary work of art—a piece of sculpture, a good mural, some original paintings. There is everything to be said for the possession of some objects of real beauty and value, objects which outside people are anxious to see and which the child grows into valuing as a personal possession.

Thring said that the great public school was built round its chapel. There could be many far worse ideals in school buildings today. Where separate school chapels are considered impossible—and we are all too ready to see things as impossible—school halls must be built to serve for this purpose, so that morning assemblies and numerous formal occasions can be affairs of dignity and beauty in dignified and beautiful surroundings. Halls and corridors must have fine pictures and true decorations, not utility charts and graphs of attendance, so beloved of all organizers, planners, and hospital authorities. Possibly a certain amount of the money allotted to each new school should be spent on some particular feature in excess of all standard requirements. Let there be the risk of occasional mistakes rather than perpetual hygienic standardization.

Whenever possible, too, the members of each generation at school should be encouraged to build and construct some



permanent feature to be retained in the school. Such things as mural decorations, the planning of gardens, the planting of trees and shrubs, the carving of wood, the constructing of models, the superb binding of certain books, and the retention of first-class pieces of work in any subject are some of the ways in which a school may acquire character and develop a feeling of continuity.

The great headmaster, when he appears, must be given the utmost possible freedom to develop his school on original lines, and all inspection made to insist first on adequacy, but then on the encouragement of initiative and individual development. Adventurous experiment in classrooms, in the open air, or by means of travel and change must receive official support. The school must be a living thing and not merely a standardization.

The wise headmaster will in turn see that his staff have equal freedom, and we may hope that the day will pass for ever when he considers himself as a kind of supervising taskmaster wandering round to enforce further discipline on refractory pupils and ever-increasing supervision on suspicious teachers, when his gods are continual little time-books to be signed and note-books to be overlooked. He must also be freed from the ever-increasing forms and statistics which have overwhelmed many in recent years. A headmaster ought to be too valuable to employ daily as a junior clerk. Fortunately much is now being done to give him clerical assistance.

Of teachers we have already spoken, but, again, they must be encouraged and enabled to show initiative and adventure, and given sufficient salaries to lead lives with opportunity for travel and wide increase in knowledge. Opportunities for refresher courses at intervals throughout their careers will do something towards keeping their outlooks vigorous and alive. For those who grow dispirited and tired, early retirement should be made easy. Disillusion and boredom may be unfortunate in a butcher or a grocer, but in a teacher they are a menace to pupils and society.

There is great value to be found in the older system of each form having a regular form master. It is all too easy for a school to possess numbers of experts in each subject who teach the subject well, but who have no particular interest in the boy. There was great value in a man teaching a number of subjects and having, not only wider intellectual interests and



being able to correlate his lessons, but also 'owning' a particular class or form for a long period. In this way much greater personal attention and understanding could be given to each boy, and general form activities of great value could be promoted. The old-fashioned method of one person being responsible for one form, had, of course, its weaknesses, but it also possessed great opportunities for friendly co-operation and a certain homeliness which is sometimes lost under the present system. More teachers with general honours degrees or training in teaching three or four subjects rather than specialization in one only may well help to provide a solution. Probably all teachers should feel able to teach some English and very many more be trained in addition to teach religious knowledge, physical training, and some art, craft, or music. It will probably be an improvement for the pupils, but it will certainly be better for the teachers.

The great school will have buildings that can live in the memory of each of its sons, and teachers who are full of vitality and initiative. It can well do without the sentimentalized schoolmaster of recent fiction whose idiosyncrasies and kindly inefficiency in extreme age endear him to countless generations of old boys.

But beyond the merits to be acquired from teachers and buildings, the boys or girls themselves make the school, and, in the phrase of an answer, it must contain 'a crowd of good fellows'. More and more, the boys must be encouraged to make the school their concern, its tone, its facilities, its fortunes their responsibility and their pride. That means that there must be a wide freedom which is not licence, and a very large amount of self-government.

Any good school lives, not only by its ordinary daily activities, but by its special occasions which cannot be made too impressive. Repeatedly I have been told of the proud memories of young men who figured in special events in elementary schools, who took part in celebrations and services in assemblies, and who treasure phrases from speeches at final leaving services. Those events cannot be overestimated in importance, and share with adventures organized by the boys themselves in leisure time the proudest memories of earlier youth.

The attempts so far made to describe the great school in terms of the present age and of the various types of day school



attended by ordinary children, all seem to miss the mark. We are soon thinking in terms of stone, brick, cement, paint, of good planning, and well-guided courses of instruction and coaching, of the training to prepare men and women to live in a changing modern world, of the preparation of pupils to be adaptable, critical, and clear seeing. These are all extremely important and a good school may well attempt to achieve these aims. No more can be expected—yet greatness may still be missed.

I believe greatness is allied in some way to love. Thus, the great school is the place where there is great love. This may be shown in various ways, the love of teachers for their subjects—something much more than competence, interest, or even enthusiasm—the love of teachers for their pupils and their activities, the love shown in the buildings and the continuous care taken of them, the growing love of pupils for learning, for their teachers, for their fellows, the love derived partly from the school but extended into the outside world it touches. As any or all these aspects flourish, so the school is lifted from the earthy facts of every day and its pupils enter, even if faintly, into the kingdom of heaven.

Finally, it must be admitted that the true quality of a great school cannot be defined, because it is a spirit produced from many sources and over a period of time, but the fact that it is spirit must be recognized. The true education will be begun in the great school, and all other varieties are only flashy imitations. The true education, as in the past, comes from living in the right atmosphere and with the right people in the right surroundings. It is the task of those who believe in education to see that this is found in a host of great schools up and down the country, in places where there is learning as well as initiative and experiment, hard work as well as gay adventure, sacrifice and unselfishness as well as personal development, dignity and beauty with 'a certain homeliness about it', health of body combined with critical intellectual development, and where there is not only life, but the added grace of life more abundant, where love is seen in action.

*Don't be proud of your knowledge.*





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